

Place  
Attachment

# Human Behavior and Environment

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ADVANCES IN THEORY AND RESEARCH

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Emergence of Intellectual Traditions

Volume 12: Place Attachment

# Place Attachment

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To the memory of

HAROLD M. PROSHANSKY

pioneer of environment and behavior studies,  
distinguished scholar, charismatic leader,  
friend, colleague, and mentor

Articles Planned for Volume 13

WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
Editors: Irwin Altman and Arza Churchman

Women and Home-Based Work  
KATHLEEN CHRISTENSEN

There Just Comes a Point . . . .  
Women Residents' Activism in Public Housing  
ROBERTA FELDMAN AND SUSAN STALL

Women, Work, and the Urban Environment  
SUSAN HANSON AND GERALDINE PRATT

Women's Roles in Planning Organized Settlements  
LIISA HORELLI

The Aging Woman: Domains of Choice  
SANDRA HOWELL

Everyday Life in Contextual Perspective  
WILLIAM MICHELSON

Sociospatial Relations of Transition  
ELLEN J. PADER

Land Use and Zoning Barriers to Women-Sensitive Environments:  
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Girls, Boys, and the Environment  
RACHEL SEBBA

Women and Transportation  
LALITA SEN

Women and the Environment Revisited:  
Learning from Lesbian Invisibility  
MAXINE WOLFE

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# Preface

This twelfth volume in the series examines an emerging area of research and scholarship in the behavior and environment field that has long-range implications for environmental design. Within the past several years, the broad issue of place attachment has become an exciting topic of discussion at conferences and in scholarly and professional journals. Furthermore, place attachment is being studied by scholars from several disciplines who are bringing to bear different philosophical approaches, theoretical formulations, and research methodologies.

The diversity of analyses and increased attention being given to place attachment highlight its multifaceted nature. Not only is place attachment being studied from diverse perspectives, but such study also investigates a variety of environments: small-scale objects, moderate-scale environments such as homes, larger-scale communities and neighborhoods, and very large-scale cities and regions.

Consistent with our approach in previous volumes, the present volume draws together scholars from several disciplines, including anthropology, architecture, family and consumer studies, folklore, gerontology, landscape architecture, marketing, psychology, sociology, social ecology, and urban planning. Authors address aspects of place attachment from the perspective of their disciplines, unique conceptual approaches, and research programs. Each chapter also presents some promising directions for future studies of place attachment.

The volume is organized in terms of the scale or scope of environments to which people are attached, although several chapters deal with more than one level of environmental scale. Following a broad overview of the concept by Riley (Chapter 2), who addresses definitional, theoretical, and philosophical issues, Belk (Chapter 3) analyzes place attachment to microenvironments, specifically objects and collections of objects. There then follows a cluster of chapters that deal with different aspects of home or local environments. Chawla (Chapter 4) examines childhood attachments to homes and related environments; Cooper Marcus (Chapter 5) analyzes adult attachments to childhood and contemporary homes; Ahrentzen (Chapter 6) focuses on homes as work

settings; and Rubinstein and Parmelee (Chapter 7) examine older people's attachments to institutions and previous home environments.

Another group of chapters analyzes attachments to larger-scale environments. Low (Chapter 8) analyzes a Central American plaza from the perspective of a broad theoretical framework; Pellow (Chapter 9) reports on life in a residential compound in Africa; Lawrence (Chapter 10) describes an annual ritual activity in a Spanish community. Then, at a somewhat larger environmental scale, Hufford (Chapter 11) illustrates attachment processes in a ritualized fox chase in a forest preserve. Finally, Hummon (Chapter 12) and Brown and Perkins (Chapter 13) address community levels of place attachment.

The concept of place attachment is rich and varied, and deserves continued attention by scholars and designers from many disciplines. The contributors to this volume reflect the diversity, complexity, and fullness of the concept of place attachment, and collectively encourage further study and analysis from many disciplinary, theoretical, and philosophical perspectives.

Volume 13 in the series, *Women and the Environment*, will focus on a variety of environmental settings in homes, workplaces, transportation, and public settings in relation to young girls and adult and elderly women. The first editor is pleased to be coediting that volume with Arza Churchman, Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel.

The present volume is dedicated to the memory of Harold M. Proshansky, who died in 1991. An intellectual pioneer, Hal Proshansky was also a warm and dedicated friend, colleague, and mentor. His professional and personal courage, and his persistence and unflagging loyalty to the ideals and goals of behavior-environment studies, have sustained successive generations who followed in his path. Although we will sorely miss his leadership and scholarly contributions, we are thankful to have benefited from his sustained creativity and commitment to the field.

IRWIN ALTMAN  
SETHA M. LOW

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# Place Attachment

A CONCEPTUAL INQUIRY

SETHA M. LOW AND IRWIN ALTMAN

## INTRODUCTION

This volume explores the concept of place attachment to (1) illustrate its multi-disciplinary foundations, (2) identify its various aspects, (3) highlight its potential importance in research and environmental design, and (4) lay the foundation for a conceptual framework to guide future research.

The volume includes contributions of scholars with backgrounds or experience in anthropology, architecture, family and consumer studies, folklore, gerontology, landscape architecture, marketing, psychology, social ecology, sociology, and urban planning, with authors providing integrative analyses of place attachment from the theoretical and methodological perspectives of their fields. The chapters also examine attachment to a variety of places—homes, neighborhoods, plazas, landscapes—as well as place attachments at different life stages—childhood, middle years, and later years. The present chapter initiates a preliminary inquiry into the concept of place attachment, based on the material in this volume and in other writings.

## BACKGROUND

Historically, attachment to place was of interest primarily to earlier phenomenological scholars, such as Bachelard (1964) and Eliade (1959), and to

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recent generations of phenomenologists with direct interests in environment-behavior issues (Buttimer & Seamon, 1980; Kohak, 1984; Relph, 1976; Seamon, 1982; Tuan, 1974; and others). Their analyses of place attachment are rich and varied, often focus on homes and sacred places, and emphasize the unique emotional experiences and bonds of people with places. For the most part, however, the phenomenological perspective did not, until recently, capture the attention of many environment and behavior researchers and designers. Because earlier environment-behavior studies were dominated by positivist philosophies of research, phenomenological approaches that emphasized unique subjective experiences, albeit within cultural and historical contexts, were not always viewed as productive research strategies. In recent years, however, with a more eclectic and broader acceptance of alternative scholarly approaches, phenomenological analyses are increasingly important in environment and behavior studies.

A number of other factors may also have resulted in an initially limited interest in place attachment. At a broad cultural level, the history of New World Western cultures has been one of instability, migration, and change, with research emphasizing how people seek out and adapt to new situations, rather than focusing on how they affiliate and attach themselves to their new locales. Further, most of the social sciences up until the late 1970s were rather ahistorical, with an emphasis on synchronic rather than diachronic processes, and on comparisons across cultures rather than on changes and development within cultures. Place for many social scientists other than geographers was not even a relevant category, and many studies of communities, towns, or villages presented only the barest analyses of people-place bonding, or even descriptions of physical environments.

At the same time, early work in environment-behavior studies was heavily influenced by psychological approaches, with their emphasis on individual cognitive functioning, for example, peoples' knowledge, understanding, beliefs, and cognitions about various aspects of the environment. Concepts of emotional and cultural attachments to the physical environment were not salient during the early days of research on people-environment relations. Over time, however, research by social psychologists, sociologists, and others began to address personal spacing, territoriality, family and group use of space, crowding, environmental meaning, and other topics. These developments, coupled with an emerging cross-cultural flavor provided by anthropologists, heightened interest in studies of affectively laden places, such as homes, childhood environments, sacred places, and residences for the elderly. Simultaneously, researchers began to pay attention to social issues of homelessness, relocation, mobility, changing family structures, crime, and community development. In so doing, human emotions about places became salient, including personal and family upheaval, stress, alienation, loss of rootedness to places, and a variety of affective disruptions.

Within this intellectual and social milieu, the concept of place attachment—the bonding of people to places—began to capture the attention of researchers and practitioners. Phenomenological work that had been of only

casual and indirect interest began to assume a more central role in the thinking of scholars and designers, and place attachment became the theme of various symposia, conferences, research studies, and theoretical analyses. It is within this intellectual context that the present volume aims to facilitate research and theorizing about place attachment. This introductory chapter discusses the general concept of place attachment, and describes some of its key aspects, origins and roles, as reflected in the chapters in the volume and in related work by other scholars.

## THE CONCEPT OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

Place attachment subsumes or is subsumed by a variety of analogous ideas, including topophilia (Tuan, 1974), place identity (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983), insidedness (Rowles, 1980), genres of place (Hufford, Chapter 11), sense of place or rootedness (Chawla, Chapter 4), environmental embeddedness, community sentiment and identity (Hummon, Chapter 12), to name a few.

The history of thinking about place attachment also seems to be following a trajectory similar to that of many concepts in the social sciences. Based on intellectual and secular issues, some of which were noted earlier, a problem or phenomenon becomes salient, and intellectual energy begins to be devoted to it. Early in its history, scholars often treat the phenomenon as if there is consensus about its meanings, scope, and underlying dynamics. For example, in the 1970s, research on crowding began with enthusiasm and presumed consensus about the meaning of the idea. To some extent a similar aura presently surrounds the topic of place attachment.

On the other hand, the history of research on previously popular topics such as crowding or territory indicates that early presumptions of consensus eventually eroded, and scholars entered a second stage in which they described the phenomenon with greater rigor, developed taxonomies of subtypes, often concluding that it was multidimensional and consisted of several related but different phenomena.

The present volume was developed on the assumption that the time is ripe for a second-stage analysis of place attachment—wherein scholars explore the diversity of its meanings as a basis for subsequent research and application to environmental design. Our analysis and the chapters in this volume illustrate how place attachment is a complex and multifaceted concept worthy of systematic analysis.

In a third phase of scientific and scholarly work, not yet evident in the study of place attachment, there is development of systematic theoretical positions and clearly delineated programs of research and application of knowledge to the solution of practical problems. While not prejudging the future trajectory of thinking about place attachment, we believe that it is now appropriate to move beyond the first stage of presumed consensus and into a phase



where we attempt to define it more precisely. Only then will we be able to progress toward a third stage of theoretical development.

As an intermediate step toward achieving this larger theoretical goal, we invited scholars from a diversity of disciplines and with differing perspectives to set forth their own definitions, analyses, theories, and research and fieldwork on place attachment.

## SOME ASPECTS OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

Our analysis of place attachment is based on several assumptions: (1) place attachment is an integrating concept comprising interrelated and inseparable aspects; (2) the origins of place attachments are varied and complex; (3) place attachment contributes to individual, group, and cultural self-definition and integrity.

### PLACE ATTACHMENT AS AN INTEGRATING CONCEPT

The fundamental assumption of our and others' analyses of place attachment is that it is a complex phenomenon that incorporates several aspects of people-place bonding. This means that place attachment has many inseparable, integral, and mutually defining features, qualities, or properties; it is not composed of separate or independent parts, components, dimensions or factors. This view is compatible with transactional perspectives (Altman & Rogoff, 1987), contextualist orientations (Stokols, 1987), phenomenological approaches, and other holistic philosophical views.

### BONDING AND "ATTACHMENT" FEATURES OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

One of the hallmarks of place attachment that appears consistently in most analyses is that affect, emotion and feeling are central to the concept. Thus Ahrentzen (Chapter 6) refers to women's feelings about homes and their work therein; Cooper Marcus (Chapter 5) describes "loved" childhood and adult places and feelings associated with them; Chawla (Chapter 4) refers to preferences, happiness, satisfactions, and fondness for places; Brown and Perkins (Chapter 13) speak of emotional embeddedness, feelings of security, esteem, and belonging associated with places; Hummon (Chapter 12) describes emotional investments in places; Pellow (Chapter 9) refers to a sense of well-being in places. Similar emphases on affect appear in the writings of others who deal with place attachment (Bachelard, 1964; Eliade, 1959; Seamon, 1982). Although many scholars emphasize positive affective experiences and emotions associated with places, several writers also describe negative feelings about places (Ahrentzen, Chapter 6; Cooper Marcus, Chapter 5; Hummon, Chapter 12).

Lest we overemphasize the affective quality of place attachments, however, a number of writers state that emotional qualities are often accompanied

by cognition (thought, knowledge, and belief) and practice (action and behavior). That is, place attachment involves an interplay of affect and emotions, knowledge and beliefs, and behaviors and actions in reference to a place (Proshansky *et al.*, 1983).

Almost every chapter in the present volume addresses affective and cognitive aspects of place attachment; several also make salient the behavioral, action-oriented practices between people and places. For example, Pellow (Chapter 9), Lawrence (Chapter 10), and Low (Chapter 8) describe how ongoing activities in residential compounds, conduct of annual rituals, and daily events in public plazas, respectively, contribute to feelings of attachment to these places. Riley (Chapter 2) illustrates how active and overt coping with environmental demands affects emotional bonding to places; Cooper Marcus (Chapter 5) highlights how creating, manipulating, and molding places in childhood are salient aspects of emotional bonding to a place; Hufford (Chapter 11) describes affective relations between people and places associated with complex action patterns and sequences in a fox chase; and Belk (Chapter 3) portrays the ways in which prized objects and collections are central to people's attachment to things.

#### "PLACE" ASPECTS OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

The word "attachment" emphasizes affect; the word "place" focuses on the environmental settings to which people are emotionally and culturally attached. The question arises, however, as to what is meant by the word *place*. Place, in our general lexicon, refers to space that has been given meaning through personal, group, or cultural processes. For purposes of our discussion, places may vary in several ways—scale or size and scope, tangible versus symbolic, known and experienced versus unknown or not experienced.

With respect to scale, places can be very large (e.g., the earth, universe, or nation), mid-sized (e.g., cities, communities, and neighborhoods), smaller (e.g., homes, rooms), or very small sized (e.g., objects of various kinds). In the present volume, Hummon (Chapter 12) addresses attachment to larger-scale communities and cities; Lawrence (Chapter 10) examines ritual practices in a community; Brown and Perkins (Chapter 13) analyze reactions to community upheaval. In other chapters, Low and Pellow (Chapters 8 and 9) report on moderate-scale settings, such as plazas and living compounds, respectively; Hufford (Chapter 11) studies a forest preserve area. At a smaller scale, Ahrentzen (Chapter 6), Cooper Marcus (Chapter 5), and Rubinstein and Parmelee (Chapter 7) examine a variety of home settings. Finally, Belk (Chapter 3) analyzes attachments to small-scale objects and collections of objects.

Questions for future research concern the nature and dynamics of attachment to different types of places and objects. Do the same principles apply to people's bonding to objects and places of varying scale, or must they be understood as distinct phenomena? What about tangible and specific places versus intangible symbols of places? A community or even a nation is a tangible and definable place. A flag, slogan, or caricature is, however, a symbol of a commu-

nity or nation. Are attachments to real places different than or separable from affective feelings toward symbols of places? What about attachments to places with which we have had direct experiences versus places that we only know about indirectly (e.g., having visited a religious shrine versus only hearing or reading about such a place)? Are there differences in attachments to real places in comparison with mythical, hypothetical, or imagined places (e.g., heaven, mythical islands of health and wealth, "promised lands")? Although authors in the present volume did not address all of these issues, especially those involving imagined or hypothetical places, others have done so (e.g., Tuan [1979] wrote about mythical places and places of perceived fear and danger). And, anthropological writings are replete with descriptions of cultural attachments and aversions to mythical, imagined, and idealized places (Helms, 1988). Thus, understanding place attachment may require differentiation of affective and symbolic relationships with a variety of settings.

#### SOCIAL ACTORS AND PLACE ATTACHMENT

Many scholars, including several in the present volume, focus on the attachment of individuals to places. On the other hand, a number of our authors highlight the fact that dyads, families, community members, and even whole cultures often consensually or collectively share attachments to places. In this respect, therefore, there are a variety of collective group or cultural place attachments that may transcend the unique experiences of individuals. At the individual level, for example, Ahrentzen (Chapter 6) examines individual women's attachments to their homes as work settings; Rubinstein and Parmelee (Chapter 7) study attachment of the elderly to their homes; Chawla (Chapter 4) analyzes children's attachments to places; Belk (Chapter 3) focuses on individual attachments to objects and collections of objects; Riley (Chapter 2) considers individual attachments to various aspects of the landscape; Cooper Marcus (Chapter 5) examines personal attachments to childhood and contemporary homes.

On the other hand, several authors examine group, collective, and culturally based attachments. Thus Lawrence (Chapter 10) portrays community and neighborhood collective attachments in the context of an annual ritual; Pellow (Chapter 9) describes the social structure of an African living compound in terms of participants' collective involvement and attachment to the place; Low (Chapter 8) analyzes plazas and other settings in terms of culturally shared meanings and social relationships; Hummon (Chapter 12) and Brown and Perkins (Chapter 13) examine both individual attachments and shared meanings and bonds of families and neighbors to communities. Collective social attachments to places are especially salient during times of relocation, upheaval, and environmental disasters.

#### ATTACHMENT MAY INVOLVE SOCIAL RELATIONS

The term *place attachment* implies that the primary target of affective bonding of people is to environmental settings themselves. Thus many authors refer

to places as satisfying because they permit control, creativity, and mastery, and they provide opportunities for privacy, personal displays, security, and serenity. On the other hand, a number of scholars indicate how attachment to places may be based on or incorporate other people—family, friends, community, and even a culture. Thus the social relations that a place signifies may be equally or more important to the attachment process than the place *qua* place. Riley (Chapter 2) states that attachments may not be to landscapes solely as physical entities, but may be primarily associated with the meanings of and experiences in a place—which often involve relationships with other people. Similarly, Hufford (Chapter 11) describes how the forest preserve is important because it symbolizes the bonding of men with one another and with their dogs in the fox chase. Cooper Marcus (Chapter 5) illustrates how attachments to childhood homes may be reflected (or rejected) in adult homes because of their prior associations with family life in childhood. And, the anthropologically oriented chapters by Low (Chapter 8), Lawrence (Chapter 10), and Pellow (Chapter 9) emphasize how public places such as plazas, neighborhoods, and compounds make salient community and culturally relevant symbols and experiences. Places are, therefore, repositories and contexts within which interpersonal, community, and cultural relationships occur, and it is to those social relationships, not just to place *qua* place, to which people are attached.

#### TEMPORAL ASPECTS OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

Time and change are complex and relatively neglected aspects of psychological, social, and cultural phenomena (McGrath, 1988; McGrath & Kelly, 1986). In analyzing temporal features of homes from a cross-cultural perspective, Werner, Altman, and Oxley (1985) distinguish between linear (past, present, and future) and cyclical or recurring meanings and activities. They also describe how homes vary with regard to past, present, and future periods, scale of temporal events, pace of activities, and temporal rhythms of events in homes.

Although these and other temporal features have not been systematically applied to place attachment, an array of writings illustrate how temporal issues are part of bonding to places. For example, some chapters in this volume focus on past settings; others are present oriented; still others involve past and present linkages. Cooper Marcus (Chapter 5) and Chawla (Chapter 4) describe place attachments to childhood settings of homes and natural landscapes. Cooper Marcus also illustrates how contemporary homes sometimes reproduce or reject features of childhood homes, thereby reflecting place attachment as a past–present representation. Rubinstein and Parmelee (Chapter 7) demonstrate how elderly people residing in institutions are attached to homes that reflect their adult lives and how those past adult attachments make salient favorable or unfavorable aspects of their present circumstances. Brown and Perkins (Chapter 13) describe how relocation or environmental disasters relate to attachments to community members' homes and community organizations.

On the other hand, Ahrentzen (Chapter 6) addresses shifting meanings and attachments to contemporary residences as women work at home.

Some authors illustrate cyclical temporal aspects of place attachments in the form of recurrent rituals on annual and more frequent occasions. Lawrence (Chapter 10) portrays how people in a Spanish community annually “reattach” themselves to one another and to their community by means of a ritual celebration. Hufford’s (Chapter 11) description of the fox chase in a forest preserve highlights the cyclical recurring linkages of men, animals, and the forest. Her analysis also makes clear how the culture of the fox chase incorporates the history of earlier chases, contemporary chases, and future ones, yielding a rich and complex temporal patterning of events.

In summary, place attachment is an integrating concept that involves patterns of:

- Attachments (affect, cognition, and practice)
- Places that vary in scale, specificity, and tangibility
- Different actors (individuals, groups, and cultures)
- Different social relationships (individuals, groups, and cultures)
- Temporal aspects (linear, cyclical)

Although our analysis illustrates the complex nature of place attachment, it also addresses psychological, social, and cultural processes associated with (1) the formation of place attachments and (2) the roles and purposes of place attachment.

## DEVELOPMENT OF PLACE ATTACHMENTS

Several scholars explicitly or implicitly address four processes associated with the formation and/or maintenance of place attachments: (1) biological, (2) environmental, (3) psychological, and (4) sociocultural.

Biological processes discussed by Riley (Chapter 2) include evolutionary and physiological adaptations of the human species to particular environments, which yield an ecological “fit” between people and places. Although this fit is not necessarily directly experienced by the individual, it is a basic kind of people–place linkage.

Riley (Chapter 2) and Hufford (Chapter 11) describe environmentally based theories of place attachment. For example, some scholars postulate that environments create people–place relationships through the interaction of technologies and resources (cultural ecology), adaptation of people to the constraints and opportunities of the environment (geomorphological regionalism), or the impact of the environment on all aspects of human habitation (environmental determinism). These environmental processes are not well defined and have been criticized as relying on biological or adaptational explanations for social processes. Nevertheless, there is evidence that environmental factors are

incorporated into cultural strategies through narratives and symbols, rather than being direct deterministic influences.

Psychological factors also play an important role in place attachment. Indeed, they are the most frequently discussed sources and manifestations of place attachment in the present volume and in the literature at large. Psychological processes cover a broad array of factors, and generally refer to individual experiences in places during childhood (Cooper Marcus, Chapter 5; Chawla, Chapter 4), adult life (Rubinstein and Parmelee, Chapter 7; Brown and Perkins, Chapter 13), or to especially significant events in a person's life (Brown and Perkins, Chapter 13).

Another level of analysis involves sociocultural origins and dynamics of place attachment. For example, Ahrentzen (Chapter 6) views the ways in which social norms and ideologies influence attachments and attitudes of women and others to home-based work and the home itself. Hummon (Chapter 12) describes the impact of cultural and public meanings and symbols on attachments to neighbors and communities. Lawrence (Chapter 10) and Hufford (Chapter 11) highlight the importance of rituals in establishing and maintaining place attachment, stating that it is through ritual performance that environments attain meaning. Further, Ahrentzen (Chapter 6) and Fellow (Chapter 9) emphasize that cultural processes of place attachment are systems of social reproduction and social norms that constrain as well as locate human relations.

Low (Chapter 8) illustrates how place attachments involve culturally shared affective meanings and activities associated with place that derive from sociopolitical, historical, and cultural sources. She describes six processes of culturally based place attachments: (1) genealogical bonding through history or family, (2) linkage through loss of land or destruction, (3) economic ties through ownership, inheritance, and politics, (4) cosmological bonding through spiritual or mythological relationships, (5) linkage through religious and secular pilgrimage, and participation in celebratory cultural events, and (6) narrative ties through storytelling and place naming.

Although some scholars emphasize a particular origin of place attachment—biological, environmental, psychological, sociocultural—others point to the interrelatedness of these factors. For example, Rubinstein and Parmelee (Chapter 7), Hummon (Chapter 12), Brown and Perkins (Chapter 13), Belk (Chapter 3), and Riley (Chapter 2) describe how place attachment simultaneously involves individual, social, and cultural processes. While we concur with the idea that place attachment needs to be understood at individual through cultural levels of study, several questions arise. Do all of these levels function in the same way? How are place attachments at psychological, social, and cultural levels similar and different? How do different levels of place attachment influence and relate to one another? Are some levels more important in certain ways than others? Our assessment of the literature is that these and related issues are not addressed very systematically, nor do they seem to be on the immediate agenda of many researchers. Nonetheless, they warrant attention.

## ROLE AND PURPOSE OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

Implicit in much of the discussion to this point is the idea that place attachment serves a number of functions for individuals, groups, and cultures. At one level of analysis, place attachment may provide a sense of daily and ongoing security and stimulation, with places and objects offering predictable facilities, opportunities to relax from formal roles, the chance to be creative and to control aspects of one's life. At another level, place attachment may link people with friends, partners, children, and kin in an overt and visible fashion. It may bond people to others symbolically, providing reminders of childhood or earlier life, parents, friends, ancestors, and others. Furthermore, place attachments may link people to religion, nation, or culture by means of abstract symbols associated with places, values, and beliefs. In many respects, as Riley (Chapter 2) noted, it may not be attachment to a particular place that is central; rather, it may be affective attachments to ideas, people, psychological states, past experiences, and culture that is crucial. And it is through the vehicle of particular environmental settings that these individual, group, and cultural processes are manifested. The place may, therefore, be a medium or milieu which embeds and is a repository of a variety of life experiences, is central to those experiences, and is inseparable from them. Thus the place *qua* place is not necessarily the ultimate focus of the attachment.

Extending this idea, one can infer from many writings that place attachment may contribute to the formation, maintenance, and preservation of the identity of a person, group, or culture. And, it may also be that place attachment plays a role in fostering individual, group, and cultural self-esteem, self-worth, and self-pride.

Most of the authors in the present volume describe the importance of place attachment to self-definitional processes. For example, Belk (Chapter 3) refers to William James's analysis of the self as including a person's body, mind, possessions, and relationships with others. Brown and Perkins (Chapter 13) emphasize how place attachments are integral to self-definitions of individuals, as well as to community members' sense of group identity. Rubinstein and Parmelee (Chapter 7) analyze how the bonds of elderly people to places foster a sense of self, strengthen self-images, and allow people to retain a positive self-concept as their life and circumstances change. Cooper Marcus (Chapter 5) and Chawla (Chapter 4) describe how children's psychological development is dependent upon experiences in places where they learn to role-play, explore, create, control, and relate to their physical and social worlds. The psychological and social functions of place attachment are also implied in Proshansky *et al.*'s (1983) statement that memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, and meanings that relate to the everyday physical setting in which people function constitute place identity—which itself is an aspect of a person's self-identity.

Beyond the individual level of analysis, several chapters highlight how place attachment fosters and sustains group, community, and cultural identity.

For example, Low (Chapter 8) emphasizes how place attachments provide people and groups with a sense of unique cultural identity. Pellow (Chapter 9) illustrates how actions in places with others yield a sense of individual and group identity; Lawrence (Chapter 10) demonstrates the development and maintenance of community bonds through the playing out of an annual cultural ritual; Hummon (Chapter 12) analyzes the ways in which people and groups develop shared symbolic meanings that produce a sense of community distinctiveness and uniqueness; Ahrentzen (Chapter 6) illustrates how the home as workplace displays congruities and incongruities regarding individual and cultural conceptions about women's identities and roles in homes; Brown and Perkins (Chapter 13) examine community identity during times of crisis. Although not discussed specifically in the chapters, one can also foresee how cultural and community aspects of place attachment relate to issues of urban neighborhood change, racial and ethnic conflict, and nationalistic tensions.

A consistent theme in the chapters of this volume is that place attachment not only ultimately plays a role in individual, group, and cultural identity, but that these levels of self-definition are not necessarily distinct from one another. Thus individual self-definitions often incorporate group and cultural processes, meanings, and values. At the same time, cultural identity often involves shared and consensual meanings among individuals. On the other hand, the interweaving of self, group, and cultural identities yields a complex set of processes that also necessitates study of their individual and interactive relationships in different conditions.

### REPRISE

The contributions to this volume and other writings on place attachment lead us to conclude that:

1. Place attachment is an integrating concept worthy of study by scholars in a variety of disciplines. Furthermore, moving beyond present levels of understanding of place attachment will require careful definitional and taxonomic work.
2. In a preliminary taxonomic analysis we proposed the following key aspects of place attachment:
  - a. Its focus on affect, with attention also given to cognition and practice.
  - b. Its place orientation, recognizing that environments vary in scale, specificity, and other features.
  - c. Its temporality, including cyclical, linear, and other features.
  - d. Its social-interpersonal importance, including who is attached to places, and the social targets of attachments, both of which can include individuals, groups, communities, and cultures.

We also examined aspects of the origins and dynamics of place attach-



ment, including biological, environmental, psychological, social, and cultural sources. Finally, we presented an analysis of the roles and purposes of place attachment, including security, exploration, predictability, control, and individual, group, and cultural identity.

All of this makes for a rather complex concept, perhaps so complex that place attachment may not be a single phenomenon. Instead, it may be necessary to describe a variety of types of place attachments that differ in their aspects, origins, and purposes. Indeed, one of our goals in the present volume is to sensitize scholars to the potential diversity and complexity of place attachment, so that they will more clearly define, describe, and develop systematic theoretical analyses of this most important and exciting concept.

### *Acknowledgments*

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# Attachment to the Ordinary Landscape

ROBERT B. RILEY

I may not know who I am, but I know where I am from.  
—WALLACE STEGNER, *Wolf Willow*

The phrase “attachment to the ordinary landscape” seems simple and straightforward, if vague and inclusive. Nevertheless, each of the three critical terms deserves attention. *Attachment* I define as an affective relationship between people and the landscape that goes beyond cognition, preference, or judgment. *Ordinary* means routine, experienced in everyday life. This excludes “special” landscapes, those that contrast with routine experience, landscapes such as shrines and wilderness. *Landscape* I use in a broad, naive sense, as a setting for human experience and activity. In scale, it might be described as “larger than a household but smaller than one of earth’s biogeographical regions.” It includes some of the spatial topics of other chapters in this book, such as possessions, childhood places, community, home, and home gardens.

A subject this large must be broken into manageable chunks. One way to begin is to think of a human as interacting with the landscape in three ways: as a member of a species, not only a mammal but a hominid; as a member of a particular culture or subculture; and as a unique individual. This sets up distin-

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guishable commonsense categories. Each category represents a major school of thought, claiming to be the "true" base.

## BIOLOGY, CULTURE, AND INDIVIDUAL

### THE BIOLOGY OF EVOLUTION AS CORE OF THE LANDSCAPE EXPERIENCE

Attachment to the environment is often considered to be both inherent and invariant in the human species. Some architectural writers (e.g., Bloomer & Moore, 1970) claim that because we equate buildings with the human body, we seek clear-cut design distinctions between front and back, up and down, and inside and outside. Other writers look to the interaction of evolution and environment, claiming that because human beings evolved from earlier forms of mammals and hominids in response to place-specific stimuli and demands, we prefer environments similar to those of critical evolutionary stages. Even *human* can be defined environmentally, as in Richard Leakey's personal conversation, (Koobe Fora, Kenya, 1982) definition of the first human as a savanna-dwelling hominid that walked erect.

Various conceptual schemes have been proposed for moving from such generalities to specifics of the human landscape. Spivak (1973) proposes archetypal spaces as part of our psychic repertoire, spaces for fundamental activities such as sheltering, sleeping, mating, feeding, excreting, playing, and storing. Jay Appleton (1975) sees the early human as the predator of certain animals but the prey for others. He infers an evolutionary advantage to seeing without being seen and a human proclivity for locations that allow this. He proposes the concepts of "prospect" and "refuge" and notes the common use of caves, lookout towers, belvederes, and vistas from enclosed spaces, in landscape design and painting. Paul Shepard (1967) claims that the human visual preferences for right angles is a result of our early hominid time spent in trees, and reflects both branching structure and the critical need to distinguish between up, down, and sideways. Bachelard (1969) sees the role of cellar and attic as primordial in human place-making and dwelling, inside and outside as a basic dichotomy in the human relationship to the world.

In a more sophisticated speculation, Shepard (1973) concentrates on the larger environment as the habitat of the primordial human foodstuff, the large mammal, and the savanna as an eternal, imprinted, ecological niche for humans as predators. He sees this landscape not only as a survival resource but as the educational tool of human development, and the learning process of the child as tied to touching, exploring, naming, classifying, and finally reasoning from landscape elements. Humans have a built-in affection for that early setting, not significantly affected by human artifacts, because of its evolutionary role in developing the powers of discrimination, judgment, and reasoning. If such permanent, evolutionary biases are the root causes of human attachment to the larger landscape, how are they translated into such feelings that we might experience today? At what scale are early landscapes "racially remem-

bered?" If the racial memory is for the earliest ecosystem, now thought to be the savanna, how do we explain attachments for any other type of landscape, natural or artificial? Are such tastes later developments or simply overlays?

Another evolutionary-based explanation, an alternative to archetypal elements and to racial memory of specific ecological settings, is that of an inherent human tendency to organize specific spatial experiences and patterns into a larger landscape experience. The specific elements are less important than the acts of cognition, organization, and ultimate attachment. Such attachment of humans to a larger landscape can be understood as a specifically human parallel to the ethological concept of home range. Speculations about human landscape and behavior based on ethology, however, should be seen as analogies, not as theories. The excesses of Ardrey (1966) in extrapolating from animal territoriality to human patriotism, and the embarrassing naïveté attendant upon such simplistic borrowings as territoriality, personal space, and home range by popularizers of human spatial perception should make us suspect of such explanations.

Few of these theories are subject to experimental testing, though they are often the subject of philosophical inquiry. Such explanations of biological, evolutionary-based human experience enrich our conceptual vocabulary of the environmental experience but are unlikely to produce proven explanations.

#### ATTACHMENT TO THE LANDSCAPE AS A CULTURAL PHENOMENON

The idea of attachment as a culturally determined phenomenon lies between the idea of panhuman tendencies and that of landscape affection as specific to an individual. The idea of landscape attachment as culturally determined is, chronologically and evolutionarily, a logical step beyond biological universality, as the landscape itself becomes more and more affected by, and finally mostly made by, human culture.

Environmental determinism is a primitive attempt to relate landscape, culture, and human personality traits. Examples are Aristotle's description of the Mediterranean versus the Northern races through twentieth-century descriptions of national character and traits, determined by the geography and climate of a country (in Tuan, 1971). Environmental determinism has long been discredited in geography, but lives on in the hearts of travelers and the prose of travel writers. Lawrence Durrell's (1969) descriptions of the landscape shaping the traits of its people are seductive enough to make us nearly forget the intellectual absurdity of his claims.

A respectable tradition in geography, however, stakes out more reasonable claims about landscape and culture. For convenience, I will describe three positions along a continuum concerned with human traits and landscape. The first of these is the idea of a defined landscape as the basic unit of human activity, a view attributed mostly to the French *pays* school, geographers such as Lucien LeFevre (1925) and Vidal de la Blache (1926). This is not to be confused with environmental determinism. The contention is that culturally distinctive human societies are based on geomorphologically distinctive regions.

The tie between the culture of the people and their landscape is the key to understanding collective human activity. The way in which people develop a specific geographic region gives particular color to human institutions and habits. Carl Sauer (1963) differed from these French geographers in many ways, but Sauer, too, saw landscape as the basis for culture. This explanatory connection between human culture and a particular, distinctive landscape dominated geographical thought through the 1940s, under the term of regional geography. In the rationalist-positivist revolt following World War II, regional geography was rejected as descriptive, as idiographic instead of nomothetic. Subsequent disenchantment with the rational-positivist model of geography itself, and the inadequacy of such of its products as central place theory, returned attention to the ties between culture and landscape. Some phenomenological geographers credit Sauer and the French geographers as their intellectual precursors, in their insistence upon the impossibility of isolating human experience from place. Sauer begins his classic essay by claiming that geography is a phenomenological science, however differently he uses the phrase. Decades later, Buttimer (1969) notes his understanding of the link between experience and its place component. Even the last major work (1988) of Fernand Braudel, a leading practitioner of the *Annales* school, which has been accused of substituting history for geography, can be read as an attempt to apply the *pays* approach to the nation of France, linking national character to landscape.

Cultural ecologists within anthropology, such as Marvin Harris, take a similar view. Harris sees efficient environmental utilization—these systems used to extract, process, and distribute environmental resources—as a major determinant of human culture. Cultural institutions and attitudes legitimize and reinforce these processes of environmental utilization. In his more dramatic and controversial positions, Harris (1977) links ritual Aztec cannibalism with protein consumption and the Jewish dietary laws with the need to restrict the use of hogs in an arid environment.

Neither the French *pays* school, nor Sauer, nor Braudel, nor the cultural ecologist, deals directly with human attachment to the ordinary landscape, but their work provides an intellectual underpinning for various approaches, such as phenomenological geography, that do address such issues. If every culture is a response to a particular landscape, we would expect cultural attitudes and attachments to bear a relationship to that landscape. Consideration of this issue is a potential help in the phenomenological concern with moving from the individual to the generalizable.

A second way of looking at landscape and cultural attitudes sees the landscape itself as a cultural artifact, a natural base transformed or molded by a particular group's technology and culture. In the words of J. B. Jackson (1984),

landscape is the place where we establish our own human organization of space and time. It is where the slow, natural processes of growth and maturity and decay are deliberately set aside and history is substituted. A landscape is where we speed up or retard or divert the cosmic program and impose our own. (p. 157)

Cultural traditions, as well as technologies, produce landscapes. This interpretation is particularly useful in dealing with cultural phenomena across time and space. The North American landscape, for example, is thought of as developing from cultural hearths, discrete areas of the Eastern seaboard settled by distinct ethnic, national, and cultural groups with their own landscape tools and biases (Fischer, 1989; Zelinsky, 1973). The spread of these technologies, house forms, and even landscape values westward across the continent produced a national landscape of distinct regions.

The concept of landscape as cultural artifact does not depend upon the almost mystical concept of a *pays*, but upon the documentable phenomena of a people making a landscape into a cultural form, with continuity and values. Attachment, a feeling for the congruence of culture and landscape, is familiar in the sense of region and regional identity. This can vary from a simple, strong sense of fitting into a regional landscape, to a complex as sophisticated as the southern literary regionalism in the United States. It can operate at scales from neighborhood to entire regional, even national, landscapes.

At a larger end of the scale, David Lowenthal and Hugh Prince (1965) analyzed the English taste in landscape as an affection for specific prototypes of English landscapes and landscape characters shared by an entire national populace. American literature abounds with such attachments, from landscapes at the neighborhood level, such as James T. Farrell's (1938) and Nelson Algren's (1942) Chicago novels, through Western pulps, to the nationalistic poetry of Stephen Vincent Benet (1942). In contrast to the traditional attachment to the *pays*, affection for a landscape and the bonds with it are explicitly acknowledged and are sharpened by the self-conscious awareness of other landscapes.

If conscious bonding to a regional landscape is a step beyond unconscious immersion in the *pays*—a step in the direction of abstraction and cultural evolution and heterogeneity—in a third stage, affection for the ordinary landscape can be focused through more abstract landscape symbols. Such symbolism is analyzed by Donald Meinig (1979), who sees Americans as responding to three symbolic environments: the New England village, Main Street, and California suburbia, the landscapes of steeples and red maples, of store fronts with the Elks above, and of carport, swimming pool, and patio barbecue. Several levels of abstraction operate in this concept of landscape attachment. First, the symbols refer only to select elements of the regional landscape. As Meinig observes, the steeple and green do not even represent the ethnically heterogeneous and socially stratified village of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* (1938), much less the computer-based New England settlement of today (Louv, 1983). Second, symbols come to represent generalizable qualities or conditions, not just specific landscapes. Alfred Kazin (1951), growing up in a Jewish section of Brooklyn, talks of long walks through the more affluent sections where "they," the "real" Americans (today they would be called WASPs), lived. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1926) can be read as a novel of social landscape symbols, from the estates of Long Island as symbols of Gatsby's social ambitions to, at the end, the winter landscapes of the Midwest as symbols of the

narrator's rejection of Eastern values. Last, the abstract, self-conscious attachment to the landscape opens the way for manipulation of symbols, and the exploitation of affection. The English cottage garden under the New Zealand Alps is a straightforward, personal use of such symbolism. The imperial creation of pseudo-British landscapes through the empire is a more complex use of landscape attachment, using symbols not only to represent one's own values but to impose them upon others. Raymond Williams (1973) and John Turner (1979) have described how, within the English homeland itself, landscape poetry, landscape painting, and the popularization of older agrarian landscape images diverted attention from the economic changes transforming that same landscape. Images playing upon the affection for German cultural forms of vernacular building and landscapes were part of the Nationalist Socialist propaganda repertoire (Koerner, 1989), and the "natural landscape" of Germany itself was popularized in a most curious precursor to the contemporary Green Movement (Groening & Wolschke-Bulmahn, 1986, 1987).

#### INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE AS THE BASIS OF LANDSCAPE ATTACHMENT

However stringent the limits imposed by biology or culture, it is clear that the individual's own life, body, and experiences play a major role in attachment to the landscape. Patterns of an individual's affection for the landscape are thought to be a product of childhood experience. A well-known example is Marcus's (1978) contention that designers often repeat favorite landscapes from their own past in their designs for others. Edith Cobb (1977) claims that there is a special age in children "say from about five to nine" in which environmental sensitivity is particularly acute and that preferences for an attachment to landscapes are established during that period. Roger Hart offers the most convincing exploration of this point of view. To Hart (1979), a child of 3 or 4 constructs his emotional environment from the familiar isolated places of bed, room, and home. With age, as the child's play is removed farther from the stable center, exploration extends the range of the familiar and the comfortable. The middle years from 5 to 12 are characterized by an increased range matched by an increasing mastery. This mastery prepares the individual for the later complexity of integrating the social world of the adolescent and then the adult. Attachment to the landscape at various scales is inseparable from the development of the personality, from relative helplessness to complete self-actualization. While all this is reasonable, to assume that all attachment established at an age is then frozen, however, is to ignore the complexity of the human experience, and the powers of personal development.

Attachment to the landscape is not simple. It is a complex set of threads woven through one's life. Childhood's landscapes, and later attachments to landscapes, are not only sources of satisfaction in themselves but the stuff of an ever-changing interior drama within the human psyche. Specific landscape images and landscape attachments are indices to the total of an individual's solitary and social experiences. Whether attachment to the landscape is based upon biology, culture, or individual experience, it is memory that makes it

more than a simple stimulus–response phenomenon. While understanding of the physio-psychological mechanisms of the response is now beyond us, nevertheless, we can identify some of the forces that make attachment to the landscape a complex, emotional, human phenomenon. In this search writers of fiction, poetry, essays, and autobiographies are particularly valuable.

### ENCOUNTER, TIME, AND FANTASY

Such explorations, while not “science,” are equally valuable for understanding attachment to the landscape. James Agee’s (1957) celebration of his childhood landscapes offers beautiful entry points into such reflections, as well as clues to the intricate interweaving of the physical and social environment.

And who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth, lying, on quilts, on the grass in the summer evening among the sounds of night. (p. 8)

Consider also:

When I knew Granddad was in bed I went back to the windmill and stopped the blades, so I could climb up and sit on the platform beneath the big fin. Around me, across the dark prairie the lights were clear. The oil derricks were lit with strings of yellow bulbs, like Christmas trees. The lights were still on in the kitchens of the pumpers’ cabins, the little green-topped shacks scattered across the plain, each one propped on a few stacks of bricks. Twelve miles away, to the north, the red and green and yellow lights of Thalia shimmered against the dark . . . . Sitting there with only the wind and the darkness around me . . . I thought of the wild nights ahead, when I would have my own car, and could tear across the country to dances and rodeos. I picked the boys I would run with, the girls we would romp; I kept happy thinking of all the reckless things that could happen in the next few years. (McMurtry, 1961, pp. 5–6)

### SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

These quotes, and most landscape literature, emphasize social encounter, time, and internal narrative, or fantasy. The power of Agee’s remembered lawn comes from nurturing and loving relationships, not physical aspects of the environment. The attachment comes from people and experience, the landscape is the setting. We remember landscapes where good things happened to us. The landscape is part of the experience, it can become a symbol for that experience, but it is not the primary element. Often, powerful landscape memories are associated not only with good experiences but with shared, good experiences. But powerful landscape memories can also be solitary, and even unpleasant. Concentration only upon the pleasant and the interpersonal restricts our understanding. Fairy tales persistently emphasize the frightening environment, such as the experience of being lost in the woods. From *The Wind in the Willows* (Grahame, 1908) and *Winnie the Pooh* (Milne, 1926) through the haunting paintings of De Chirico to the abstract concept of the sublime, some landscapes feature the exhilarating twinge of terror. Some of these landscapes



are "special," not ordinary. But ordinary landscapes can be powerful through their oppressiveness, as many autobiographies prove. Landscapes can be roots, but landscapes can also be bonds.

This issue is critical. To what degree do places become memorable because of experiences occurring there, not because of physical attributes of the environment? Environments can be inconvenient and inefficient. They can discourage positive social experiences. We might learn that some specific physical design of elements of a landscape encourage certain emotions or internal experiences. But this does not justify the environmental determinism of contemporary designers, nor their preoccupation with "sense of place," that mystic creation of "simpler cultures," or today's hero designer.

### TIME

A second theme of the Agee and McMurtry quotes is the role of time. The Agee quote is prologue to a story of time and memory, of a man returning to childhood landscapes upon the death of his father. Time, landscape, and people are inextricably entangled. The experience of McMurtry's young hero is the reverse: the landscape of the mind is a fantasy of what the hero will do and become.

These complexities of time, memory, and internal processing are explored by two authors of very different time and place, Marcel Proust and Wallace Stegner. Proust's life work, *Remembrance of Things Past* (1934), has been described as about many things: heterosexuality, homosexuality, family, class, and the complex range of emotional relationships between people. It is also about memory, time, and landscape (Fardwell, 1948; Girard, 1987; Poulet, 1962, 1967; Robertson, 1975). Proust offers many insights into the emotional ties and power of the experienced landscape: about building blocks of landscape attachment—rooms, a street, the ocean; about moods such as loneliness or coziness; about Freudian dependence of so many emotions upon the primary relation to mother. Most importantly for this essay, he offers a powerful statement of two aspects of the landscape experience.

First of these is the memorability of landscape as the setting for social, personal experience. To Proust, as to Agee and McMurtry, attachment to place arises from what was experienced there. But Proust also offers us a second concept, a unique, extraordinarily complex view of the phenomenon of landscape attachment, of internalized remembrance itself. As people and places are intertwined in Proust's landscapes, so are past and present, so are landscape experienced and landscape remembered. Proust collapses time and recycles it. His landscape experiences transcend time and break the march to the grave. The essential attachment is not to the landscape itself, but to its memory and the relived experience. The imagined landscape has more meaning, power, and importance in the role of the human experience than landscape experienced concretely. Is this possible, that the greater power of place lies not in inhabiting it but in remembering it? Do we all live, relive, a Proustian land-

scape? Is memory transformed but a memory, or is it the essential emotional relationship with the landscape? However common this Proustian landscape might be, Proust's place is secure for his powerful evocation of the ability of small, almost stray, stimuli—the smell of madeleines and tea—to unlock the whole, great, internal complex of landscape remembered and landscape experienced.

If Proust offers us a link between the landscape concretely experienced and the landscape internally refigured, Wallace Stegner offers us a link between landscape attachment as individually experienced and culturally experienced. The first two essays in *Wolf Willow* (1962) begin with a conventional entry into the landscape of childhood, and reference to Cobb's view of the ages between 5 and 12 as the time landscapes are imprinted. He turns to smell as the elicitor of remembered landscape.

... is with me all at once, what I am hoping to re-establish, an ancient, unbearable recognition, and it comes partly from the children in the footbridge and the river's quiet curve, but much more from the smell, for here, pungent and pervasive is the smell that has always meant my childhood. I have never smelled it anywhere else, and it is as evocative as Proust's madeleines and tea. (p. 18)

Stegner moves beyond these highly personal reveries to a larger, cultural landscape. He examines not only the tiny section of creek bottom, but the vast landscape of the American high plains, examines what love of that place means to him and to the society which made it, lived in it, and belonged to it. In his later writings (e.g., 1987), he explores the destructive side of that attachment, a possessiveness that leads to irresponsibility and abuse. He says of his own bond,

I may not know who I am, but I know where I am from . . . I am a product of the American earth and in nothing quite so much as in the contrast between what I knew through the pores and what I was officially taught. (1962, p. 23)

It is not irrelevant that Stegner, in addition to being a sensitive essayist and novelist, is an historian of the American West, for *Wolf Willow* is a book in which the history of the American and Canadian West is entangled with the landscape of emotion. Stegner sees the Westerners' love of land as a function of settlement history.

Time is as central to cultural attachments to landscape as to individual attachments. The actual age of a landscape, the meaning attributed to it over time, a sense of time itself (often a slower pace than that of Anglo-Saxon culture), all interact to produce landscape attachments. Can any person with a Western education experience the Aegean islands without the baggage of the history of Western civilization? Does that sense of time, of primordial beginnings preceding cultural continuity, produce the power of the landscape? The role of time across cultures and landscapes is a persistent and predominant theme in the writings of David Lowenthal (1975, 1977, 1979), summed up in his *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (1985).

### FANTASY

A third theme of the authors treated, and of central concern to Proust, is that of internal narrative, which I will call simply *fantasy*. McMurtry's perch above the Texan plains was a stimulus to fantasy. The external landscape gains much of its power as a setting for experience. It is logical that the internal landscape, the landscape of memory and fantasy, also gains much of its power from the imagined experiences, the stories, that one sets in that landscape. Despite our talk of symbolism, despite our acceptance of the psychoanalytical interpretations, despite decades of experimentation with psychedelic drugs, and despite the contributions of deconstructionist literary theory, we ignore the role of fantasy in the landscape. Are we afraid of it, embarrassed by it? Real scientists don't dream landscapes? When we ask what patterns of trees, meadow, mountain, and water make a Western national forest overlook popular, we might also ask how many visiting males are fantasizing themselves as John Wayne or Gary Cooper.

### QUESTIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

How are we to make sense of all this? What intellectual understanding have we of attachment to the ordinary landscape? We have little usable theory, but a multitude of frameworks, intellectual structures for organizing thoughts on and observations about attachment to the landscape. My own two cuts across this field, that of biological, cultural, and individual levels and that of social experience, time, and fantasy as components are only such frameworks. The many alternative frameworks have yet to be even collated, catalogued, or compared, except maybe in the erudite work of Yi Fu Tuan (1971, 1974, 1977). Analysis and classification are a rudimentary first step in organizing and advancing our understanding. Until such a time, a logical step is to pose questions that cross or link frameworks, questions that if answered would add to our understanding. These questions define research directions.

### RELATION BETWEEN BIOLOGICAL, CULTURAL, AND INDIVIDUAL FRAMEWORKS

How important is attachment to the landscape in the biological foundations of human experience? We seldom ask this elementary question except as a rhetorical device. Ethology is rich with description of spatial patterns among animals. The extrapolation of such patterns to a human level of behavior, let alone bonding to place, is questionable. Second, one might ask about those patterns of spatial behavior themselves. While such patterns might indicate spatial "needs" among animal species, translation to the human experience is suspect. Maybe such "needs" are satisfied in other ways in the human animal, surrounded as we are by the constructs of culture and individuation. Ethologists consider territoriality as variable across and within animal populations. Some species are territorial, some are not. Some species are territorial at some

times of the year and not at others. Territoriality has been in fact described as existing primarily between males of the same species defending territory on the basis of food supply or reproduction (Martin, 1972). Yet the variability of the ethological base is seldom recognized by its popularizers.

Are such patterns of spatial behavior and attachment better understood as strategies than as instincts, as social rather than biological manifestations (Altman, 1975). The implications for attachment to the landscape are considerable, and raise the question of a possible hierarchical relation of the three levels. If territorial behaviors and "attachments" are instinctive and immutable, then it is more likely that both individual and cultural attachments are derived from them. Appleton (1975), taking this position, sees attachment to prospect and refuge as basic, but translated, in painting, in planning, and in preference, into culturally and individually favored forms. The biological attachment is the foundation upon which cultural norms are based, and individual attachments are, in turn, a subset of a culturally determined array. If, in contrast, we conceptualize animal patterns as strategy, not instinct, such a hierarchical explanation is unnecessary and less likely. Attachment to landscapes is derived from the specific landscape context and goals common to a culture or an individual.

Such hierarchical speculations are of little help in our understanding or investigations. Designers are happy to posit an instinctive territorial base for human behavior and affect, because such an instinct both emphasizes the importance of environmental design and promises generalizable principles of spatial behavior and satisfaction. But how many of us will accept extrapolation of dominance among primates as justification for authoritarian politics or, with Ardrey (1966), territoriality as a basis for nationalistic chauvinism? Hierarchical structuring also assumes or imposes a separability among the three levels that conflicts with both common sense and current theory. The view of individual attachment as no more than refinement or adjustment within culturally defined possibilities is exactly the kind of superorganic, reified role for culture that contemporary social scientists protest.

While arguments about the relation between the three levels are likely more distracting than productive, the questions are probably well kept in mind, while pursuing more rewarding questions. One might speculate on the possibility of a pie chart arrangement where the "levels" become sectors, or a color wheel arrangement, where transition is more continuous, or possibly three intersecting sets, with three two-set and one three-set subsets.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES

Landscape behavior and attachment varies among people just as it varies among individuals. While this variation has received little scientific attention, some questions on the subject might prove useful in advancing our understanding.

Are there generalizable associations between landscape attachments and personality traits? Ralph Hamerton, a nineteenth-century writer of Ruskin's

persuasion, if not his discrimination, offered a direct and extreme answer. Taking debate about landscape affect beyond the canvas, Hamerton (1885) claimed that particular moods, even personality, corresponded to specific, real-world, mood-inducing landscapes, such as mountains, or seascapes. His views seem naive today, but the question of association between landscape and personality is open, and certainly as worthy of attention as that, for example, among color, personality, and mood. A generation with our penchant for both personality profiles and indices, on the one hand, and for measuring landscape preference, on the other, might at least consider a possible relationship between them.

As prominent as attachment to place is in fiction and memoirs, we have paid little attention to its variability, or the importance of variability, among individuals. Some questions are obvious. Is the environment, and attachment to landscape, more important in some people than in others? Why? Inherent disposition, or the effects of environment? Are landscapes associated with permanent or transitory moods? Despite that nineteenth-century silliness, some emotional relations to different types of landscapes fit our common experience, and could be easily investigated. If, as Hart, Cobb, Shepard, and others believe, environmental attachments are formed from childhood experiences in the environment, what will happen to a generation of children whose exploration is conducted less in the traditional exterior landscape and more within the "virtual reality" (Rheingold, 1990) of computer systems?

Another rich question is that of the variability of the content and the strength of landscape attachment through an individual's life. Tuan (1971) has observed that the psychological importance of the environment is to some extent in inverse proportion to the ability of an individual to cope with it. The environment is of more importance to helpless infants, to the seriously ill, to the incapacitated, and, often, to the elderly. How does the emotional relationship to the environment, positive or negative, vary with such importance? Does the strength of landscape attachment vary with ephemeral moods, superimposed over grosser changes associated with life stages? Does perceived stress affect such attachments? If so, how? Finally, what is the relationship between attachment to place and attachment to people? Sopher (1979) said that relationships among people are of primary importance in human life and that attachment to place is secondary. But does the relative importance of the two attachments vary among people or personality states? Can one compensate for the other? If so, how, and under what circumstances? After all, John Ruskin, the most articulate landscape lover of his century, never consummated his marriage to Effie Gray. These are only a small sample of the questions that could be pursued.

#### ARE THERE SPECIAL LANDSCAPES?

Many writers have speculated not only on the presence of archetypal landscape elements, such as cave and tower, attic and cellar, prospect and

refuge, but on archetypes of the larger landscape experience. "Nature" and "home" are usually the privileged categories.

### *Nature*

To some, there is no surrogate for nature. Human well-being—physical, mental, emotional—is a function of contact with nature, the nonhuman world of plants and animals. Ortega y Gasset (1972) sees the human male as first a hunting animal and the hunt and the kill the prime environmental experience. The same theme underpins the utopian environments of Paul Shepard (1959, 1973) and Nigel Calder (1967). Nature as the *sine qua non* of the environmental experience is also implicit in the current concept of deep ecology and to many professionals with a vested role in advocating nature as the most important part of the experience. Roger Ulrich (1979, 1984) and Rachel and Stephen Kaplan (1989) have convincingly documented the preference for nature, at least in contemporary Western culture, but preference is not need. Challenging that postulated basic, organismic need for nature has produced unreasoning reactions. When Martin Krieger (1973) judiciously asked, "What's Wrong With Plastic Trees?" Iltis (1973) labeled him as someone who might get his sexual satisfaction from inflated, lubricated, plastic mannequins. What does nature offer that is unique? The answers have often bordered on mysticism, although Wohlwill (1983) did examine commonalities among stimuli, forms, and scenes commonly identified as natural.

### *Home*

Home is often identified as *the* archetypal landscape, standing alone or joined with journey, with road, shrine, and garden. Home is magical. The idea of home matches what seem to be our instincts, but how far have these instincts been conditioned by culture and even cliché? The most thoughtful exploration of the meanings, the flexibility, and the range of the concept of home is Eric Sopher's *The Landscape of Home* (1979). The idea of home as image of self, propounded by Bachelard (1969) and rephrased by Cooper (1971), might be a valid, useful concept, but assuming its universal applicability hinders exploration of human landscape attachment. This insistency on home as archetype persists despite the work of Aries (1962), of Janeway (1971), and the popularized history of Rybszcinsky (1986), despite evidence all around us that home is an extraordinarily malleable concept. *Home* has been devaluated to a status symbol, as much as a fulfillment of "need," in our society and has replaced house almost to the point of calling a brothel a whorehome. Holdsworth (1990) notes that manipulation of the concept of home, followed by home ownership, followed by long-term mortgage, has been an effective device of industrial employers in establishing a captive, permanent labor pool. Home achieves an almost mystical significance among the phenomenological

geographers, although Buttimer (1980), as usual, offers a more restrained and sensitive exploration of the subject, seeing the need to expand it, and to supplement it with the concept of reach.

The changing place of the landscape of home shows up in four of the more perceptive television situation comedies of the last two decades: "All in the Family," "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," "Barney Miller," and "Cheers." Archie and Edith Bunker's home, almost the only set used in the series, is a caricature of domesticity. Its ironic treatment emphasizes both tradition and anachronism. In "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," the definition of home is traditional but limited. Most people I talk with think of Moore in her workplace. In "Barney Miller," home has completely disappeared, replaced by the squad room and by references to the streets, apartments, bars, and pawn shops of Manhattan. The squad room has become home. In "Cheers," home is central, but it is negative. The bar is what it is because home is what it is, and no one wants to be home. Contrast those four presentations with the successful and saccharine "Cosby Show," in which the landscape of home has subsumed all other landscapes, in a blend of traditional values and yuppie materialism.

#### CULTURAL VARIABILITY

The issue of variability has been as neglected at the cultural level as at the individual level. There are few cross-cultural comparisons of the importance and nature of attachment to the landscape and its manifestations. Paul Oliver (1987) observed that the role of architecture as a locus of meaning is highly variable across cultures. Some cultures place an emphasis on decoration and symbolism in their buildings, others do not. Contemporary writers on Islamic architecture (e.g., Arkoun, 1983; Kuban, 1983) have pointed out that architectural forms and shapes are generally of little importance in transmitting and confirming the tenets of the Islamic religion, except secondarily in such ways as facilitating the separation of the sexes and family from nonfamily. Some cultures are almost entirely and constantly migratory, others follow a pattern of semiannual transhumance, others are completely sedentary. Migrations sometimes take place between radically different environments and other times through environments of fairly uniform ecological and visual character. Does the importance of place and the attachment to it vary with such factors? Erdrich (1988) has noted the importance of landscape attachment among contemporary Native American fiction writers. Is this a long-standing cultural attachment to place different from that of the European culture that displaced it? The Native American example also raises the issues of whether attachment to place and the importance of landscape is intensified in times of cross-cultural contact and imposition. This also raises the more general issue of landscape attachment in relation to cultural change.

#### CULTURAL CHANGE

The most obvious cultural change, far advanced in North America, is the transition from folk culture to popular or mass culture. The clearest distinction

between these two types of ordinary (as opposed to “elite”) cultures is drawn by Glassie (1969), who notes three essential differences. First, folk culture varies over space, forming regions; mass culture varies over time, forming periods. Second, folk culture and forms are inspired by tradition; mass culture and form by the media. Third, folk forms are made *by* people, popular forms *for* them. Thus, the landscapes of both a folk culture and a mass culture are *ordinary* in our terms, but in other ways, they are very different.

Both landscape and attachment to the landscape are likely to be different in two such different cultural forms. Are we likely to have any attachment at all to landscapes made not by us, but for us, landscapes often dominated by mass merchandising? Replacing *ordinary* with a synonym, *common*, hints at an answer. *Common* landscape can refer to ubiquitousness, or to shared values (e.g., Stilgoe, 1982). An ordinary or common landscape can produce affective impact as an explicit focus for common feelings, a symbol. But common meanings, the communication of shared feelings and experiences, can reside in ordinary landscape and surely produce emotions about them without self-conscious inflation simply because they are shared references, shared contexts. This was expressed by Louise Erdrich when considering the issues of attachment to the landscape in *A Writer's Sense of Place* (1988):

Whether we like it or not, we are bound together by that which may be cheapest and ugliest in our culture, but may also have an austere and resonant beauty in its economy of meaning. We are bound by common references to mass culture, to the brand names of objects, symbols like the golden arches, to stories of folk heroes like Ted Turner and Colonel Sanders, to entrepreneurs of comforts that cater to our mobility like Conrad Hilton and Leona Helmsley. These symbols and heroes may annoy us, or comfort us, when we encounter them . . . at the very least they give us context. (pp. 30–39)

The common landscape is a source of shared meaning and emotion, whether liked or disliked, whether tasteful or ugly, because it is shared experience.

Folk landscape and mass landscape might, however, represent very different types of emotional attachment. The slowness of change and the regional distinctiveness of a folk landscape could offer a sense of security, permanence in times of change, even the ability for physical return. That is less likely in a popular landscape, with its rapid changes over time. This is the common criticism of the landscape we are building today. But if Proust is right, and the importance of landscape lies in the mental play of remembering, does it matter? Changes in the external landscape might even increase the complexity and potentialities of internal restructuring, even enrich the interior emotional landscape. A landscape that one has personally made obviously has a different potential for attachment than a landscape built *for* one *by* others. All advantages are commonly assumed to lie with the former. More likely the popular landscape represents different, not fewer or meaner, opportunities for emotional attachment. These are important issues for a society in global transition from a folk to a mass culture, from a folk to a mass landscape. Conan (1990) points up a unique role that a folk landscape can play amidst a larger “massifying” landscape in his definition of vernacular gardens. “A vernacular garden



type is a man-made ecological system which has been developed and which is maintained by a social group embedded within a larger society that helps sustain in daily life some consonance between the gardener's group and larger society" (pp. 19–20). Under such conditions, emotional attachment to such a landscape is linked to awareness of it as a focus of group identity and group survival.

#### THE ROLE OF NATURE AND LANDSCAPE MODIFICATION

Two major contemporary trends are likely to drastically change people's emotional ties to the landscape. First, nature plays less and less a role in lives within industrializing and urbanizing societies. Most of evolution, most of human history, took place in a landscape in which the impact of humans was no greater than that of any other animal species. Most of our civilized history has occurred within an agricultural environment. The origin of agriculture continues to be a major anthropological controversy. We will never know whether agriculture brought with it those changes in attitudes and feelings about nature and the landscape experience that many writers claim. But by any reasonable set of criteria, the almost wholly artifactual environment of today is physically and perceptually different in its relation with nature from both the agricultural and preagricultural environments that preceded it. Even the part that remains nature is enjoyed in new ways, as with the high technology of sport (Jackson, 1957) and transport (Saint-Exupéry, 1932, 1939).

As nature becomes less common in the landscape, so does our individual role in structuring that landscape. Ironically, while as societies we transform our landscape at an unprecedented and possibly suicidal rate, as individuals we have less and less direct role in making landscapes. Hunters or gatherers have no optional relations with the landscape. It is the stuff of their lives. Farmers, fishermen, miners, or bulldozer operators, dominant over, as well as dependent upon, the natural environment, take an active, forceful role. Fern bars and garden-mania might be a reaction to the absence of nature, and redecorating one's house a surrogate for clearing a field, but the roles in our life of these diversions are insignificant compared to that which has gone. The new relationships might be less satisfying, less healthy, for human beings, or they might not. However, the qualitative and the quantitative differences are large enough to expect a significant change in people's affective relationship to their landscapes.

Many recent writers have portrayed the rupture of that knowledge and affection that comes from working the land, and the rupture of its transmission from father to son, mother to daughter. Ronald Blythe (1969, 1979, 1983, 1986) treats these themes in a blend of place history, literary analysis and oral history. Mark Kramer (1980) and Richard Rhodes (1989) write of U.S. farmers, Jane Kramer (1977) of the disappearing cowboy, John Berger sets his novel, *Pig Earth* (1979), against what he sees as the global disappearance of the peasant and the culture of survival, with all the environmental roots, and bonds, entailed. In the fictional but convincing words of one of his characters,

selling things all day, or working forty-five hours a week in a factory is no life for a man—jobs like that lead to ignorance . . . Working is a way of preserving the knowledge my sons are losing. I dig the holes, wait for the tender moon and plant out those saplings to give an example to my sons if they are interested, and, if not, to show my father and his father that the knowledge they handed down has not yet been abandoned. Without that knowledge, I am nothing. (p. 75)

### THE CHANGING NATURE OF LANDSCAPE EXPERIENCE

Most discussions of the landscape experience assume that while the objects of the landscape experience and the forms through which it might be expressed can change, the nature of the experience, as with interpersonal emotions, is a given for humans. This is not certain. A watershed in the history of human interaction with the environment is at hand. Landscape experiences in a global, information- and image-handling society are different from those in earlier societies. Members of “advanced” cultures today experience the environment in very different ways than in earlier periods.

First, contemporary information- and image-oriented society is far less dependent on place than any society that has preceded it. Many human activities take place independently of place; many can be described as almost aspatial. Webber (1964) pointed out three decades ago that for many of us, social networks are no longer dependent on physical adjacency. The results of this are wittily described in David Lodge’s (1975, 1984) novels about the transatlantic academic community, experiences probably shared by readers of this chapter. But truism has been less examined by “sense of place” theorists than would seem reasonable.

Second, as our dependence on place withers, our knowledge of landscape images increases. It is common lore that until the nineteenth century, almost all people were born, grew up, lived, and died within a five-mile radius. Transportation and communication have destroyed that landscape naïveté forever. Manipulated images of hundreds of landscapes around the globe bombard us daily. Media interpret and structure our definitions of the places in which we live. These phenomena have been noted for a quarter of a century, from Boorstin (1962) and McLuhan (1964) to MacCannell (1976), Relph (1976, 1981, 1985), and Meyrowitz (1985). But if the implications of these phenomena for human experience of the landscape have been investigated at all, it usually (Meyrowitz being the exception) has been to deplore the withering of old relationships, and to condemn the new relationships as shallow or spurious.

Here is a potential paradox. The resurgence of traditional interests in place and landscape among geographers is based on the belief that the human experience is inherently rooted in place and that all human experience has a spatial grounding. Is this inconsistent with recognizing the new and looser spatial ties of modern life? No. Even a relationship with a computer terminal happens in physical space, a *place* of some sort. It seems reasonable, *prima facie*, however, that the nature of that spatial grounding would be considerably different.

## INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS

Cultural changes affect one of the classic landscape distinctions, that between the insiders' and the outsiders' landscape. This distinction must be as old as travel, and the "grand tour" the epitome of the outsider's landscape and its cultural power. The assumption that the insider's landscape is important and the outsider's is an effete and superficial experience has been called one of the basic attributes of the American landscape experience (Lowenthal, 1968). The current version of this distinction, to which even as perceptive an analyst as Relph (1976) succumbs, is "authentic" versus "inauthentic" landscapes.

This distinction between insider and outsider will always be pertinent, but a global, information-processing society and the prevalence of media-transmitted images in every aspect of life both blur and change the distinction between the two categories. Landscape experiences in which the insider-outsider dichotomy is both conspicuous and essential take up less and less of our daily life and experience. We all move closer to becoming continual tourists and collectors of internal landscapes. The concept, the definition, of landscape itself might be changing. It has changed before. Cosgrove (1984) has linked the concept of landscape, abstractable from the life of those working a land, to the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and Jackson (1984) has for years pondered such changes. Maybe we at last are seeing his "landscape three."

## CAUTIONARY NOTES

Our culture and cultural landscape are undergoing extraordinary changes. Resistance to the new forms and nostalgia for the old is as prevalent among social scientists and writers on place as among lay people. Academic nostalgia is simply expressed in a more sophisticated language, such as "authentic" instead of "comfortable." Our first need is to examine new phenomena without cramming them into old molds or rejecting them when they do not fit.

Second, we can enrich our understanding of the landscape experience by linking now compartmentalized approaches. This chapter has concentrated on observations drawn from geography and from literature. Discussion of these issues, based on the literature of urban sociologists or art historians, might read as if an entirely different phenomenon were being discussed. Attachment to place is a subject matter, not a discipline. It is a subject matter studied by a number of disciplines, often subcultures of their own with little communication. But all these approaches are needed and only some sense of their complementarity will give any sense of the whole. In Geertz's (1973) phrase, we need to thicken our description of landscape attachment, to enhance the power of our description and understanding by arranging analyses alongside one another rather than expecting them to build upon one another as in an experimental model.

Third, we need to speculate about the total nature and process of the internal experience, through intellectual frameworks that include all aspects of experience. David Lowenthal (1961), for example, sees the human landscape

encounter as consisting of five aspects: direct experience, memory, fantasy, present circumstances, and future purposes. Such a comprehensive framework places the experience of a landscape, and any affect dependent upon it, in a context of human history, function, and intentionality, at least adequate to the complexity with which we are dealing. It offers a chance of moving from the rich description of individuals to tentative generalizations, a need that Buttner (1969) has noted. It also necessitates confronting two aspects of landscape emotions emphasized in this essay, the inextricability of landscape emotion from time, and the role of internal narrative in the landscape experience. Proust and Lowenthal take us from simple considerations, of preference and sense of place manderings, to a part external/part internal, intricate and integrated, human construct rich enough to occupy generations of scholars.

I will end with two simple reminders of practical importance. First, this chapter deals with the attachment to the *ordinary* landscape, which I distinguished from the *extraordinary* landscapes of special or celebratory purposes. But what is the difference? How does experience of that occasional extraordinary landscape, the great landscape consciously shaped by art or nature, relate to the ordinary landscape? A cathedral is not a pub, nor is the Grand Canyon the local park. Somewhere in our inquiry into attachment to the landscape we must deal with those special experiences, even those that older writers were unafraid of calling the "sublime."

Second, no matter how complex the interior response to the external stimulus of landscape, that stimulus, that landscape, remains a social and political fact, designed, owned, and maintained by people. If, as this essay has emphasized, there is an internal landscape of emotional contemplation and fantasy, there is also an external landscape of behavior, social interaction, and political obligation. If there is an internal landscape of personal gratification,

Remembrance of a particular form is but regret for a particular moment; and houses, road, avenues are as fugitive, alas, as the years. (Proust, 1934, p. 325)

Then there is also an external landscape of broader, social implication:

A landscape should establish bonds between people, the bond of language, of manners, of the same kind of work and leisure, and above all a landscape should contain the kind of spatial organization which fosters such experiences and relationships; spaces for coming together, to celebrate, spaces for solitude, spaces that never change and are always as memory depicted them. These are some of the characteristics that give a landscape its uniqueness, that give it style. These are what make us recall it with emotion. (Jackson, 1980, pp. 16–17)

We need the landscapes of both Proust and Jackson. We need to ponder their relationship. We should ask whether the truly powerful landscapes, the great landscapes, are where the two coincide.

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# Attachment to Possessions

RUSSELL W. BELK

While place attachment has received some recent attention in social science literature, such attention reveals the narrow partitions that have been employed in seeking to understand our bonds to the material environment. For bonds to place share much of the same phenomenology as bonds to our children, a favorite sweater, our cars, a pet, the family photograph album, and our own bodies. What such attachments have in common is their importance, for better or worse, in defining the self in a contemporary consumer culture. This linkage was clearly articulated by William James (1890):

Our fame, our children, the works of our hands, may be as dear to us as our bodies are, and arouse the same feelings and the same acts of reprisal if attacked. . . . a man's Self is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes, and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands, and yacht and bank-account. All these things give him the same emotions. If they wax and prosper, he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die away, he feels cast down. (p. 291)

Such possessions can give us a sense of who we are, where we have come from, and where we are going. At the same time, to define ourselves through things suggests a superficial materialism that may not be very satisfying. Understanding how possessions affect our well-being is a key goal of possession attachment research.

Following some initial definitions and discussion of the means by which we become attached to objects, this chapter presents a wide-ranging review of

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the things to which we become attached—either individually or collectively. Next, several theoretical constructs involved in such attachments are considered. With the aid of these constructs and empirical evidence, the issue of whether we are helped or harmed by our object attachments is then addressed. Finally, suggestions are offered for needed areas of future research on attachment to possessions.

### ATTACHMENT, EXTENDED SELF, AND POSSESSIONS

To be attached to certain of our surroundings is to make them a part of our extended self. The concept of attachment has been treated as an investment of psychic energy in an object (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981), as material object cathexis (Rook, 1985; Secord & Jourard, 1953), anal fixation (Freud, 1908/1959), and fetishism (Ellen, 1988). All of these attachment forces implicate the self and are consistent with Belk's (1989a) stipulation that possessions involve the extended self only when the basis for attachment is emotional rather than simply functional. We normally feel emotionally attached to a pet dog or cat, but only functionally involved with an umbrella, for instance.

Sartre (1943) suggests three ways in which possessions can become a part of the self. Objects may be perceived as part of us when we master or control them, as in mastering a musical instrument. At a simpler level, Lancaster and Foddy (1988) term this means of self-incorporation "agency." However, Belk (1988a) argues that besides these proactive means of object bonding, things may also be incorporated into self when they are perceived to control us. Thus, a prisoner may strongly identify with a prison uniform, although he or she has little control and no choice of these clothes. A second means by which Sartre (1943) suggests that an object may become a part of self is through creating it. This is essentially Locke's (1690) personality theory of property, although Sartre adds purchase as a way of creating an object. Creation and control both seem to be involved in various possession rituals, such as cleaning and redecorating a new home in order to make it truly ours (McCracken, 1988; Saile, 1985). The third way in which Sartre suggests that an object may become a part of us is by knowing it. Belk (1988a) adds a fourth means of object bonding, that is, through habituation. An armchair or knickknack, for instance, may slowly enter our identity by its mere continued presence in our lives. In this case the bonding mechanism is the contagion of shared history or experience with the object, although often knowledge through familiarity is also involved.

Possessions are not restricted to things that are owned in a legal sense (Belk, 1982; Ellis, 1985). A possession is something we call ours, regardless of whether we mean by this legal ownership, temporary control, or simply identification with a thing. This may include tangibles as well as such intangible or unownable foci as experiences, knowledge, assets, symbols, and possibly even people (Belk, 1982). Here too, only those intangible possessions toward which we feel strong affect are likely to involve feelings of attachment and self-

extension. Having defined attachment and possessions, the next two subsections examine various object attachments among two major categories of possessors: individuals and groups.

### INDIVIDUAL POSSESSIONS

#### *Body Parts*

We are attached, both physically and psychologically, to the parts that make up our bodies. We commonly feel that our selves and our bodies are inseparable. However, we are not equally attached to all parts of the body. In a study involving sorting 96 objects (including body parts) according to the degree to which they were seen as a part of self, Belk (1987) found that skin, genitals, fingers, hands, legs, heart, and eyes were all in the top quartile of cathexis scores. With the exception of the heart, which Westerners view as the seat of passion, less visible organs were not seen as being as central to self (Belk, 1990a). Women evaluated their eyes, hair, legs, skin, and tears as being more a part of them than did men. Those women who considered their organs to be less central to their identities were found to be more willing to be an organ donor for these same organs (Belk & Austin, 1986). There is also evidence that organ donation willingness is greater among those who rate their general body image as less salient (Pessemier, Bemmaor, & Hanssens, 1977) and those who view their organs less emotionally (Wilms, Kiefer, Shanteau, & McIntyre, 1987).

#### *Home*

Among the more salient of the 96 objects Belk (1987) had subjects sort according to their "selfness" were current dwelling and favorite room. Since we live out much of our lives in our homes, it is understandable that we become attached to the home as a symbol of our bibliography, an expression of self, and a source of security (Horowitz & Tognoli, 1982; Saegert, 1985). The home protects and sustains us just as our body does (Jager, 1983). McCracken (1989) found that lower social classes were most likely to seek "homeyness" in their residences, while higher social classes, like the nouveaux riches interviewed by Pratt (1981) and Costa and Belk (1990), were more likely to seek the antithetical qualities of status in their homes. The desire for homeyness seems to result in feelings of attachment to home, while the greater mobility of the newly rich is less conducive to strong home attachment. The attachments of people to their homes are strong enough that a house may continue to be referred to as "the Smith's house" for years after the Smiths are replaced by new residents. And even after death, houses are sometimes feared to be inhabited by the ghosts or spirits of those who once lived there. As with grave goods buried with their former owner, material possessions may be seen in such cases to be related to spirit possession.

### *Pets*

Eleven-hundred essays written by fifth- through twelfth-grade Minnesota students in answer to the question "What would you save in a fire?" revealed that the top two categories of items reported were pets and memorabilia (Schumacher, 1984). Attachment to pets is shown in references to pets as members of the family (e.g., Hickrod & Schmitt, 1982), in our excuse-making when they misbehave (Sanders, 1989), in the strong and sometimes pathological mourning that may take place following the death of a pet (Kay, Nieburg, Kutscher, Grey, & Fudin, 1984; Stewart, 1983), and in reliance on pets as transitional objects (e.g., Robin & Bense, 1985).

### *Gifts*

For Chicago-based parents and grandparents in a three-generation study of favorite possessions, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) found that gifts were a prominent category of favorite possessions. Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) found similar results in the southwestern United States. Attachments to gift objects generally represent attachments to the givers of these objects. The gift is often a mnemonic device that helps us remember loved ones and, when the giver has died, may become an icon or talisman (Belk, 1991a). To treat such objects as mere commodities, exchangeable for a monetary equivalent, is unthinkable. It would profane that which has become sacred.

### *Souvenirs and Mementos*

Like the gift, the souvenir and memento often achieve sacred significance in our lives. In these cases the sacralizing mechanism is contagion from the proximity of the object to a special time, place, event, or person in our lives (Belk, 1988a). In the sorting task noted earlier, items rated in the top quartile included mother, father, brother, sister, childhood memories, favorite same-sex friend, favorite past travel experience, and favorite vacation (Belk, 1987). We seek to tangibly memorialize these parts of our lives with various souvenirs and mementos, especially family snapshots. However, the photographs that crowd our family albums and slide trays are neither veridical nor representative selections from our experiences and relationships. Instead, we pose these snapshots to reflect the best of times with happy people, significant events and places, and shiny new consumption objects. We then further edit out unsatisfactory images before they are enshrined in our family albums. We are similarly biased in the nonphotographic mementos we retain, discarding reminders of rejecting suitors, failed marriages, and mediocre school grades (Belk, 1990b, 1991a). Thus, it is more accurate to say that our attachments to souvenirs and mementos help to *construct*, rather than simply preserve, an identity.

*Other People*

Another aspect of feelings of attachment to people is regarding other persons possessively. To feel attached to children, spouse, and other relatives is regarded positively. However, where such attachment is translated into feelings of ownership, repugnant images of slavery are evoked. Until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, women were treated as chattel property in much of the world (Dworkin, 1981). Children are still legally regarded in many ways as possessions of their parents or adoptive parents (Derdeyn, 1979). And recent battles over rights to abortion (Paul & Paul, 1979) and the embryo (Zelizer, 1985) show that we regard even the unborn possessively. Strong attachment to a significant other can also be a source of feelings of jealousy (e.g., Berscheid & Fei, 1977), sympathetic illness or injury (e.g., Kutash, Kutash, & Schlesinger, 1978), vicarious enjoyment of the other's success (e.g., Macke, Bohrnstedt, & Bernstein, 1979), and grief at the death of this other (e.g., Parkes, 1972). Such emotional attachments to others may be constructive or destructive, depending on their consequences for the people involved. For example, normal grief at the death of someone to whom we are strongly attached is a part of the recovery process, while pathological grief can be extremely dysfunctional (Volkan, 1974).

*Other Individual Possessions*

Numerous other individual possessions are objects of attachment for consumers in a possessive and individualistic society. They include intangible objects such as our names, beliefs, values, feelings, childhood memories, educational background, special skills, and occupation (Abelson, 1986; Belk, 1987; Nuttin, 1987). Other more tangible objects receiving high "self" ratings in the sorting task previously noted were casual clothes, vehicle, books, sporting goods, jewelry, heirlooms, wallet and purse contents, and collections (Belk, 1987). Collections are an especially significant focus of attachment because they cannot be excused as things that have entered our lives casually or coincidentally. Sigmund Freud's collection of 2,300 antiquities is a case in point (Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry, & Holbrook, 1991; Gamwell & Wells, 1989). The transfer of his collection from wartime Vienna to England is said to have made Freud's transition much easier, due to the company of his beloved statuettes (Freud, Freud, & Grubrich-Simitis, 1978). Intense collecting activity can also have an addictive character, and Freud described his own collecting as "an addiction second in intensity only to his nicotine addiction" (Gay, 1976, p. 18). In his only interpretation of the impetus for collecting, Freud observed:

The core of paranoia is the detachment of the libido from objects. A reverse course is taken by the collector who directs his surplus libido onto an inanimate object: a love of things. (Gamwell, 1988, personal correspondence quoting Sigmund Freud's comments recorded February 19, 1908, by Otto Rank in the minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society.)

While Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) do not agree that libidinal energy is the source of the psychic energy invested in the objects to which we become attached, they agree that such a transference of energy is the essence of object attachment. In addition to objects already mentioned, they find that furniture, televisions, plants, musical instruments, dinner plates, stereos, appliances, glassware, beds, and trophies are among the individual possessions that their sample of Chicago area residents cite as favorite things. In the American Southwest, Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) categorized informants' reported objects as: functional (e.g., chair, clock), entertainment (e.g., stereo, TV), personal (e.g., knickknacks), art (e.g., painting, poster), plants and other living things, handicraft (e.g., afghan, macramé) or antiques (e.g., hutch, tea cup). Both Rochberg-Halton (1986) and Wallendorf and Arnould found that, after adolescence, the most cited reasons for attachment to a favorite possession were symbolic self-expression and memory "marking" rather than more functional features of these objects. Such emotional attachments are the ones Belk (1989a) finds are involved in the extended self.

#### COLLECTIVE POSSESSIONS

The extended self may be thought of as a nested set of concentric selves resembling Russian *mitrushka* dolls. The innermost self is unextended and does not include possessions. The next level of self is extended and individual in focus and includes the possessions considered to this point. Subsequent levels of self are shared with others and in the United States commonly include family, local, state, and national selves. The objects to which these selves are attached are correspondingly aggregate family, local, state, and national possessions. Because such possessions symbolize groups with histories and futures that transcend our individual lives, they can provide a firmly anchored source of identity and continuity.

#### *Monuments*

Our attachment to such aggregate possessions as public monuments is readily appreciated when we imagine our shock in learning that the Statue of Liberty, the Eiffel Tower, or the Blue Mosque had been sold to a developer who was planning to replace the monument with a high-rise apartment building. These monuments are a part of our national mythologies and histories. They allow us to find (or create) in the past features felt to be lacking in the present (Geist, 1978), such as innocence, strength, or respect.

Local and regional historic sites and structures are also viewed possessively and are often the targets of preservationist efforts. In the United States such preservation has created historic "house museums" at a rate of one every three-and-a-half days since 1960 (George, 1989). It is such local and regional sites that we show to visiting friends and relatives, feeling pride when they are impressed and resentment when they are not. As with our family

photograph albums, the collective objects we preserve are not a representative selection of our collective past. We are most prone to preserve places and structures that are the grandest, most socially desirable, and highest-status examples available (Herbst, 1989). Thus, southern plantation mansions have been preserved, but their slave quarters have not (Bargainnier, 1978).

Another focus of aggregate extended self is the city. The city may be seen as a collection of monuments (e.g., buildings, cemeteries, museums) that extend our personalities:

The metropolitan environment . . . is a living sign-practice transcending the present moment and objectively situated in the minds and hearts of its inhabitants as well as forming an external dimension of their minds and hearts. The city is itself a public possession, but one which should also simultaneously possess its inhabitants by endowing them with the energy, communicative forms, and opportunities for participating in the larger drama of urban life. In this sense the city is a larger personality. (Rochberg-Halton, 1986, p. 191)

Belk (1987) found that those age 29 and older were more likely than younger subjects to be attached to their current neighborhood, city, state, and country, as well as state and national leaders. Younger subjects instead saw favorite nonlocal and foreign places as being more central to their identities. While cohort effects cannot be dismissed in explaining these findings, it seems likely that as we grow older we also grow more committed to the place where we live and its icons (Howell, 1983).

### *Intangibles*

Just as we become attached to individual intangibles such as our names, occupations, and personal memories, we also become attached to intangibles that we share with others. Intangible memories of the past are partly shared with others through what has been called collective memory (Halbwachs, 1950; Schuman & Scott, 1989). Collective memory encompasses the shared experiences of a generation. It helps to account for generations' attachments to different pieces of music (Holbrook & Schindler, 1989), "classic" automobiles (Belk *et al.*, 1991; Dannefer, 1980), sports heroes, movie stars, and motion pictures (Belk, 1991a). Attachment to shared intangibles also occurs on a smaller scale within families. Family vacations, holiday celebrations, and everyday shared experiences are among the intangible memories that a family treasures. The same is true of orally conveyed stories and myths about family ancestors (Stone, 1988). While stories of family history are intangible, they may be cued by family photographs, keepsakes (Belk, 1991a), and heirloom furniture (McCracken, 1988, pp. 44–53). These tangible and intangible possessions mutually support and reinforce our attachments to both the objects and the experiences they represent.

### *Other Collective Possessions*

As with the individual possessions to which we may become attached, there are a variety of other collective possessions to which we may become

attached. References to Heaven as a future home for pious Christians suggest a strong attachment to this collective "property" (McDannell & Lang, 1988). During the Middle Ages in Europe an important type of collective possession were the icons and relics of the Christian Church. From early interest by individual churches in obtaining a supposed piece of the True Cross (Regan, 1978), a cult of relics emerged which resulted in competition between churches and increased the supply of genuine and ersatz pieces of saints' remains (Geary, 1986). Not only were the relics of the saints venerated as sacred, but the places associated with saints or miracles became the destinations for religious pilgrimages (Sumption, 1975). There quickly arose a souvenir trade to serve these pilgrims, making the intangible visit to the shrine tangible (Feifer, 1986; Hahn, 1990). While the pilgrimage and hajj continue among contemporary religious travelers (e.g., O'Guinn & Belk, 1989), secular pilgrimages to places of special attachment seem evident as well, with pilgrimage sites including natural wonders (Tuan, 1976), national parks (Sears, 1989), and theme parks such as Disney World (Moore, 1980). As with religious pilgrimage sites, we seem drawn to these magical and symbolic places in an attempt to transcend our daily lives or discover deeper levels of our selves.

Other collective possessions of importance in many countries are crown jewels and national regalia (Clark, 1986; Hayden, 1987). The crown jewels are a possession of the people, even though they are worn by a reigning monarch. When this is not the case, as with the lavish personal acquisitions of the Marcos regime in the Philippines and the Duvaliers in Haiti, these expenditures are resented and regarded as illegitimate (Goldstein, 1987). But lack of indignation and resentment at the lavish expenditures of entertainers and professional sports figures may be because they do serve as symbols of aggregate self and collective values. Similarly, while the mansions of the rich may contradict the egalitarian ideals of the United States, they are at the same time a source of some pride, as evidenced in an editorial in the *New York Times* in the early 1900s proclaiming that "Nothing denotes more greatly a nation's advancement in civilization than the erection of palatial private residences" (quoted in Cohn, 1979, p. 121). We are likely to be prouder still of mansions sacralized by being donated to the public.

#### *Public Institutions and Collective Possessions*

A great many of our collective possessions are either public buildings and stadia or kept within such repositories. The most significant repositories are museums, which seek to retain for the current and future generations "the fruits of civilization," whether in art, history, anthropology, science, or industry. Like our family photo albums and public monuments, museums inevitably present a biased and selective view of our successes and (rarely) failures (Alexander, 1979). For cases of acquisition through colonial imperialism, like the British Museum's possession of the Elgin Marbles from Greece and Ashanti regalia from Nigeria, the countries seeking repatriation of these treasures claim



that they have been robbed of their national heritage and sense of past (Meyer, 1973). Regarding the Ashanti regalia, Nigeria argues that:

These antiquities are the only authentic objects which illustrate and illuminate the course of our development. This is vital to us as a people, as it enables us to establish our identity, and hence restores our dignity in the community of nations. (Chamberlin, 1979, p. 113)

If collections are the epitome of attachment to individual possessions, museums may well be the epitome of attachment to collective possessions. Museums are, in a very real sense, cathedrals where we worship material objects. As Rheims (1961) explains:

Museums are the churches of collectors. Speaking in a whisper, groups of visitors wander as an act of faith from one museum gallery to another. Until the end of the nineteenth century it was customary to visit the Hermitage Museum at Leningrad in a white tie. (p. 29)

Foreign travel is still often a pilgrimage to famous museums (Horne, 1984). It appears that museums and the collections they house are among our most meaningful collective possessions.

## TOWARD A THEORY OF ATTACHMENT TO POSSESSIONS

### THE SINGULAR, THE SACRED, THE FETISH, AND THE MAGICAL

Csikszentmihalyi (1982) suggests that possessions enhance our feeling of being in control of our environment, strengthen our self-concept, increase our self-confidence, provide us with feelings of security, and allow us to communicate our identity to ourselves and others. Apart from these utilitarian benefits, there is a more emotional and mystical set of reasons for being attached to and fascinated with our things. Belk (1991b) suggests that fulfilling any of the following criteria indicates that we regard a possession as extraordinary, mysterious, and emotion evoking rather than merely functional: (1) unwillingness to sell for market value, (2) willingness to buy with little regard for price, (3) nonsubstitutability, (4) unwillingness to discard, (5) feelings of elation/depression due to object, and (6) personification.

Even modern money, which we think of as a purely utilitarian commodity, is sometimes regarded as being noninterchangeable and appropriate for only certain uses (Belk & Wallendorf, 1990). Zelizer (1989) explains:

A \$1,000 paycheck is not the same as \$1,000 stolen from a bank or \$1,000 borrowed from a friend. And certain monies remain indivisible . . . an inheritance, for instance, or a wedding gift of money intended for the purchase of a particular type of object. The latter is a qualitative unit that should not be spent partly for a gift and partly for groceries. (p. 352)

Such monies are not the fungible commodities that economists envision when they describe money as a medium of exchange, a store of value, and a standard of deferred payment (Furnham & Lewis, 1986).

If money can be regarded as a nonfungible substance, it is not surprising that other possessions can be as well. A pet dog may be virtually equivalent to its litter-mates during the period following its birth, but the development of attachment is shown in our increasing unwillingness to trade our dog for another as we live with it longer. This is presumably partly due to affecting one another (creation/change), partly due to our knowledge of the dog, and partly due to habituation. Kopytoff (1986) called such possessions singular. The key characteristic of the singular good is its nonsalability (pricelessness). Like our children, we would normally not consider selling our pets, treasured gifts, family heirlooms, and favorite works of art for any amount of money. The temptation to desingularize or commoditize that which we believe should be above price is one reason that nations forbid the sale of people, body organs, and public offices.

People and their vital organs also have been considered nonsalable because they are regarded as sacred (Wilms *et al.*, 1987). The sacred secular good goes beyond singular status through such traits as hierophany (self-revelation), kratophany (strong approach/avoidance power), and ecstasy or flow (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989). Consumer sacralization of possessions takes place when we give or receive them as gifts, collect them, venerate them through pilgrimage, involve them in rituals, separate them from the profane, bring them into contagious contact with other sacred things, or bequeath and inherit them. For instance, gifts that originate as marketplace commodities are imbued with sacredness by carefully removing any indication of price, adding mystery through specially wrapping them, and presenting them in a ceremony where others are present and certain obligatory dialogue is spoken. Each of these steps helps transform the gift from a profane commodity into a sacred object (Belk *et al.*, 1989). A variety of consumer activities including spectator sports, music, hobbies, tourism, and collecting have been seen as attempts to remystify and resacralize our lives (Klapp, 1969). As an example, Mol (1976) offers the following humorous, but not greatly exaggerated, characterization of American reverence for automobiles:

Once upon a time there was a country that was ruled by a god named Car. In the beginning it did not amount to much. Then it came to pass that out of Dearborn, Michigan, there came a man who took Car and said, "Let there be mass production," and slowly Car took over the country. Car temples were built, car stables were put up and special stores sprang up where people could go and buy gifts for Car. Weekends became ritualistic: On Saturday the people would wash Car gently with soap and on Sunday they would pet it with a soft rag to remove any stray dust and ride around the countryside. Car ruled the country for many years, demanding annual sacrifices of several thousand people and keeping most of the people in a downtrodden state as the people tried to meet financial pledges they had made to Car. (p. 152)

Another useful theoretical framework for understanding our attachment to possessions is fetishism. Although anthropological analyses of religious fetishism, Marxian analyses of commodity fetishism, and Freudian analyses of sexual fetishism normally assume that they are quite different phenomena, Ellen (1988) has recently insightfully combined these perspectives and argued that they are in fact the same phenomenon and involve: (1) concretization, (2) personification, (3) conflation of the signifier and the signified, and (4) ambiguity about whether the person or the fetish object is in control. Concretization involves reifying abstract ideals (e.g., sexuality) by representing them as concrete objects (e.g., automobiles). Personification then involves projecting animate characteristics onto an object, as with automobiles with animal names and personalities (Neal, 1985). Conflation of the signifier and the signified occurs when we come to believe that the sign has power of its own. Thus, the bones of the saints are believed to be capable of causing miracles, and paper money is believed to have inherent value. The fourth element in Ellen's (1988) view of fetishism—ambiguity about whether the person controls the object or vice versa—occurs when the fetish object begins to exercise power over us. Addictions are a prominent example. Among many collectors, their passion for the objects they collect is self-described as an addiction, with dependence on the "fix" of another acquisition escalating with the duration of collecting activity (Belk *et al.*, 1991).

In all of these theoretical explanations—singularity, sacredness, fetishism—there is a common theme of seeking self-transcendent magic. As Belk (1991b) summarizes:

In order to understand what our possessions mean, it is necessary to recognize, reestablish, and reclaim this magic. We more often than not wear magic clothes, jewels, and perfumes. We drive magic cars. We reside in magic places and make pilgrimages to even more magical places. We eat magic foods, own magic pets, and envelope ourselves in the magic of films, television, and books. We court magic in a plethora of material loci that cumulatively compel us to conclude that the rational possessor is a myth that can no longer be sustained because it denies the inescapable and essential mysteriousness of our existence. (pp. 17–18)

Since the Enlightenment, there has been a consistent tendency for science to discredit both religion and magic (Berman, 1981/1984; Hansen, 1986). In the process, consumers may have come to satisfy their longing for the mystical in consumer goods that benefit from a veneer of rationality but nevertheless provide a focus for our passion for the self-transcendent. Advertising has readily catered to this need and has been referred to as a magic system (e.g., Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979; Williams, 1980). Consumer goods become elixirs and brands become quintessential (Cornfeld & Edwards, 1983; Sudjic, 1985) as advertisers seek to mythologize their offerings (Barthel, 1988; Jhally, 1987).

#### DISPLACED MEANING

Another part of an explanation of possession attachment involves displaced meanings. McCracken (1988) suggests that, dissatisfied with our life at

the present moment, we displace our hopes and ideals to another time or another place. When we project backward in time, we experience a wistful nostalgia for "the good old days" (Davis, 1979). When we instead project forward in time, we pin our hopes on future events (such as college degrees, marriage, or children) or on future possessions (such as an ideal home, car, or stereo)—"I will be happy once I get my \_\_\_\_." Such beliefs are again reinforced by advertising mythology. Since even the rich collector can find some object of aspiration that is out of reach, such displaced meaning is broadly available. When hopes and ideal are displaced to the past, mementos and memorabilia have increased significance. We treasure:

things that have the capacity for stimulating pleasant memories, and things that reinforce a treasured mythology of the self; things that revivify a former version of a self overlooked in the press of the daily and present self; things that recall a time of happiness obliterated by the weight of current unhappiness. (Tooley, 1978, p. 174)

A broader sense of past is also invoked, especially among higher social class families, through heirlooms (Bossard & Boll, 1950). Photographs, family Bibles, and family estates are other vehicles of contemporary Western ancestor worship. One of Rochberg-Halton's (1984) informants explained:

This [painting] is [of] my great, great grandfather. I've had it since childhood. It's more than just a portrait—it's a person! I'd grab it right away in a fire. [Without it] my life would be lessened. I'd go on living, but it would deplete my secure "lump." It would mean that I wouldn't be able to hand it down to my children. The kids already say, "I'm gonna inherit this and that." . . . It's part of the continuity of who I am, where I came from, where I'm going. (p. 171)

Obviously, a key function of such possession attachments is to reify our attachments to other people. While antiques from unknown others might not seem to fulfil the same functions as heirlooms, they can help to bring alive a period of the past with which we identify. Among several antique collectors, this identification is strengthened by the belief that certain antiques resonate for them because they had possessed these objects in a previous life (Belk, 1991a). Others use antiques as replacements for objects that have been a part of their childhoods, and thereby reify their sense of past.

## ATTACHMENT TO POSSESSIONS AND HUMAN WELL-BEING

Consider the common case of attachment to our pets. Are we psychologically helped or harmed by such attachments? To a greater degree than many of the other things to which we become attached, pet ownership has become a morally controversial and emotionally charged research topic (e.g., Cameron & Matson, 1972; Ritvo, 1987; Serpell, 1986; Tuan, 1984). Among the issues of contention is whether pets are cruelly bred (e.g., to grotesque and painful forms), modified (e.g., sexually neutered), and raised (e.g., in unnatural environments such as small apartments) merely for human amusement. While

some studies suggest that pets have positive therapeutic value with certain populations (e.g., Fogle, 1981), other studies disagree (e.g., Hogarth, Salmon, & Lavelle, 1983). Some studies suggest that pet owners are better adjusted and socialized than nonowners (e.g., Martinez & Kidd, 1980), while other studies suggest that pet owners use pets as substitutes for human relationships (Cameron, Conrad, Kirkpatrick, & Bateen, 1966). Inasmuch as there are as many dogs and cats in the United States as there are televisions (Serpell, 1986, p. 19), any such blanket indictment or admiration of pet owners is likely to be oversimplified. It is more useful to consider generalized tendencies toward object attachment or materialism.

### MATERIALISM AND ATTACHMENT

A common manifestation of attachment to possessions is *materialism*, defined as:

The importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism, such possessions assume a central place in a person's life and are believed to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. (Belk, 1984, p. 291)

Materialism has been a consistent target of both religious and secular criticism, and is charged with undermining both individual and societal well-being by emphasizing egoism over altruism (Belk, 1983a). In order to examine the effects of materialism among Americans, Belk (1984, 1985) developed a materialism scale composed of the three subscales of possessiveness, nongenerosity, and envy. *Possessiveness* is "the inclination and tendency to retain control or ownership of one's possessions" (Belk, 1983b). Thus, possessiveness may be seen as a generalized attachment tendency. *Nongenerosity* is defined as "an unwillingness to give possessions to or share possessions with others" (Belk, 1984). And *envy* has been defined as displeasure and ill will at the superiority of [another person] in happiness, success, reputation, or the possession of anything desirable" (Shoeck, 1966).

O'Guinn and Faber (1989) found that a group of compulsive shoppers who had written to a self-help group scored significantly higher than a general population sample in envy, nongenerosity, and overall materialism. There was no difference between the two groups in level of possessiveness. For compulsive shoppers it appears that the thrill is in acquiring rather than possessing things. Moderate but statistically significant negative correlations have been obtained between materialism and measures of happiness and well-being in life (Belk, 1985). Each of the three subcomponents of materialism was also found to be negatively associated with these measures of happiness and well-being. While it is tempting to infer that materialism causes unhappiness and disillusionment, causal inferences are unwarranted from these data. It is equally plausible that feelings of unhappiness lead to greater materialism in a vain attempt to become happier.

Among three generations of related adults, the middle group of parents

scored highest on materialism and two of its three subscales (Belk, 1985). Only with regard to possessiveness were teens and their parents equally materialistic. The oldest generation scored lowest on every measure. These results are consistent with previous qualitative work by Furby (1978) and Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981). While parents do much that may affect their children's materialism (Belk, 1989b), it seems that during adolescence and young adulthood, doing is a more important route to identity than having. Sometime after midlife, we begin to look to possessions primarily for the memories and linkages to others they can represent. And in later life we begin to disacquire possessions, either voluntarily or involuntarily.

Males scored significantly higher on the envy component and the overall materialism scale (Belk, 1984). Subsequent data have found men also to score higher on the nongenerosity scale than women (Rudmin, 1990). There is some evidence of occupational differences in materialism as well. Students at a religious institute scored lowest on overall materialism and each of the subscales, while machine shop workers scored highest on all measures, with business students, insurance company secretaries, and fraternity members scoring between these two extreme groups (Belk, 1984, 1985). The higher scores for machine shop workers were expected, based on Chinoy's (1952) finding of "compensatory consumption" among blue-collar workers with relatively little chance of career advancement.

Ethnographic evidence suggests that materialism is not a universal trait (e.g., Lee, 1968). Using the materialism scales described above, Dawson and Bamossy (1990) found a sample of Dutch to be more possessive than Americans. Using a modified possessiveness measure, Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) found Americans to be significantly more possessive than Nigerians. Ger and Belk (1990) used modified materialism scales and found that college students in the United States had higher materialism and materialism subcomponent scores than those in Europe. Surprisingly, college students in Turkey and Thailand had the highest scores of all. Students from these Third World countries also rated more consumption objects such as automobiles, VCRs, and vacations as being necessities than did students in the United States and Europe. While these results are still tentative and based on nonrepresentative samples in each country, they provide strong suggestive evidence of the Third World consumer culture postulated by Belk (1988b). With increased international tourism and the proliferation of Western media and advertising influence, Third World nations are aspiring to Western consumption patterns at a much faster pace than their rates of economic growth (Tse, Belk, & Nan, 1989). Unlike consumer culture in the more developed world, Third World consumer desires often mean reducing already inadequate food consumption in order to afford alluring consumer goods (Belk, 1988b). There is more than a little irony in sacrificing food to afford a refrigerator.

It is clear that excessive love of our things can be dysfunctional materialism. It can also make us unwilling to accept desirable changes in our lives. And in some cases attachment to possessions can turn us away from people. In cases reported by Belk *et al.* (1991), collectors noted that their children and

spouses were often very reluctant to become heirs to their collections. These significant others were hostile to collections they saw as successful rivals for the attention and affection of the collector. Sometimes this affection can have an erotic nature. Baekeland (1981) describes art collectors he has treated:

To a man, they report that they usually know immediately whether or not a piece really appeals to them and whether they want to possess it. They often compare their feeling of longing for it to sexual desire. This suggests that art objects are confused in the unconscious with ordinary sexual objects, an idea that gets some confirmation from the fact that many collectors like to fondle or stroke the objects they own or to look at them over and over from every angle. . . . The only other context in which looking, fondling and caressing loom so large is sexual foreplay. (p. 51)

Such cases emphasize that love of things can be an unsatisfactory substitute for love of people.

#### POSSESSIONS AND IDENTITY: SOME POSITIVE EFFECTS OF ATTACHMENT

Measures of materialism reflect general feelings about consumer goods, but they do not adequately reveal the behavioral effects and deep emotions that may be involved in our attachments to favorite possessions. Based on sorting task measures of possession centrality (Prelinger, 1959), it has been found that more highly cathected possessions are better cared for (Belk, 1987). But sorting tasks are also a limited type of evidence of the meanings of certain possessions in our lives. Another type of evidence comes from the trauma that often attends the involuntary loss of these possessions.

Those who have experienced burglaries often report a feeling of invasion of self much akin to rape (Korosec-Serfaty, 1984; Maguire, 1980). Even when little or nothing of value has been taken, there is a feeling of pollution due to the contagion of the unseen burglar (Belk, 1988a). When something is taken, there is often a process of profound grief and mourning much like that which accompanies the death of a loved one (Rosenblatt, Walsh, & Jackson, 1976; Young & Wallendorf, 1989). Insurance recoveries cannot compensate victims for the loss of irreplaceable heirlooms and gifts steeped in the memories of friends, family, and ancestors. Brown (1982) found that burglary victims expressed a lessened sense of community and lessened pride in their houses' appearance. Such events create a sudden loss of perceived control of neighborhood and community. Even when slum clearance promises relocation to ostensibly better neighborhoods, there has been found to be resentment and a sense of loss (Fried, 1963). Similar feelings attend the loss of such possessions to natural disasters (Belk, 1988a; Wolfenstein, 1957/1977).

There is also a loss of a part of the extended self in the cases of mastectomy (Feather, Kaiser, & Rucker, 1988), divorce (Kitson, 1982; Young, 1991), death of a spouse (Parkes, 1972), and abortion (Stillion, 1985). Collective self can also be injured when others who are a part of this collective self are injured, as has been found with family and friends of rape victims (Burgess & Holmstrom,

1976). On a broader scale, it is likely that most Americans shared the loss of the space shuttle Challenger when it exploded killing all aboard.

Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) found that women and older adults tend to cite as favorite objects things that symbolize others. Older people are often especially attached to contemplative possessions that help them to survey their pasts. The disruption of such attachments is thought to play a role in the high mortality from uprooting when old people are involuntarily separated from their possessions (Boschetti, 1986; Godkin, 1980; Howell, 1983; Pastalan, 1983). Only when there is control over disposition and the ability to employ disposition rituals, such as relegating the possession to storage to "cool off," is the loss of highly cathected possessions likely to be non-traumatic (La Branch, 1973; McCracken, 1988; Young, 1991). When we lack control over this process of disacquisition, it be perceived as a loss of self (Sherman & Newman, 1977-1978), but when we control the disacquisition, it can be a source of identity preservation giving us a sense that we will not be forgotten after our deaths (Unruh, 1983).

Possessions provide a sense of stability in our lives. As McCracken (1988) observes:

Surrounded by our things, we are constantly instructed in who we are and what we aspire to. Surrounded by our things, we are rooted in and visually continuous with our pasts. Surrounded by our things, we are sheltered from the many forces that would deflect us into new concepts, practices, and experiences. . . . things are our ballast. They stabilize us by reminding us of our past, by making this past a virtual, substantial part of our present. (p. 124)

Possessions can also provide us with a sense of mastery, a sense of self, and a sense of past (Belk, 1988a).

Cross-cultural studies are also informative regarding the role of possessions in identity. Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) found that while Americans favored an array of goods valued for reasons that involve mnemonic (personal or relational), entertainment, and artistic expressive values, favorite possessions in Niger were restricted to marriage/domestic goods (e.g., jewelry, beds), religious/magical items (e.g., Koran, charms), livestock, and tools. When asked to name their favorite possessions, those in Niger were also likely to first cite things that Wallendorf and Arnould regarded as inappropriate. They note that "to evoke responses from informants other than 'my fields,' 'my children,' or among Islamic adepts 'my Koranic studies,' often required some probing" (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988, p. 538). In light of the concept of extended self, it is unfortunate that these responses were not taken seriously. Together with the other items cited as favorite objects, these responses show the less materialistic emphasis in Niger compared to the U.S. sample. Objects evidencing the hajj to Mecca and ownership of cattle were still status symbols for men in Niger, but many of the favorite possessions cited were religious icons, just as Oscar Lewis found among the poor in Mexico (Lewis, 1970/1973).

Religious objects were also frequently cited as favorite objects in a study by Mehta and Belk (1991) of Indians and Indian immigrants to the United States. Among the moderately poor of Indian villages, religious objects were



seen as a means of gaining the favorable weather on which crops depended. Among the affluent in Indian towns and villages, religious devotions were instead aimed at expressions of gratitude for success and at reducing the fear that all might still be lost. Other favorite objects cited by poorer Indians in India included cattle, jewelry, ancestor photographs, and a locking storage cabinet called a *Godrej*. Women were most likely to cite jewelry (a source of security) and the *Godrej*. The intensity of feelings of attachment to such possessions may be seen in the following quotes:

These anklets were given to me by my parents. . . . I would never trade these with anything else. I would never allow my husband to take these away. If he took them he would buy liquor and grain with it and I would be left with nothing. . . . I will wear these till I die or become a widow. Only when I die can he remove them from my feet. Also I will have these if he takes up someone else (female, age 45; Mehta & Belk, forthcoming).

Recently, for the first time in my life, I lost the key to the *Godrej*. I cried for two days. We then had to get a locksmith to open the *Godrej*. . . . It was the most horrible feeling. Some outsider was going to lay his hands on my cupboard. The feeling I got was very similar to the feeling one gets when someone hurts your children. This *Godrej* has been with us since we were married. It has travelled everywhere with us. Now our children have gone and settled elsewhere, only the *Godrej* has remained with us (female, age 55; Mehta & Belk, 1991, p. 404).

The *Godrej* acts as an important symbol of family continuity, paralleling Lewis's (1970/1973) finding that the poor of Mexico attach special importance to the wardrobe.

Among Indians who have moved to the United States, religious objects continue to be cited as favorites, along with personal craft objects, pieces of furniture acquired during major status transitions, photographs (of both ancestors and current family), and a variety of artifacts made in India. In fact, the incidence of decorative artifacts from India is much higher in immigrant homes than in India, where they were never cited as favorites. Entire rooms are often devoted to Indian artifacts in immigrant homes. Other favorite objects in immigrant homes include recordings of Indian music, Indian movies, and television news and documentary programs about India. As with certain ritual-preserving religious objects, the high incidence of objects from India as favorites among Indian immigrants suggests that these objects are being used as transitional objects (Kahne, 1967) in order to provide the security and cultural identity that were taken for granted in India. Attachment to these objects represents deeper attachment to cultural roots.

Photographs and objects received as gifts also symbolize ties to others left behind by Indian immigrants. In terms of the dialectic that Altman and Gauvain (1981) call identity/commonality and Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) call differentiation/integration, clearly commonality and integration are emphasized more heavily by these Indian immigrants. Attachment to these possessions represents strong attachment to the people they represent in India. By favoring and prominently displaying objects that represent the extended family that is absent in America, these possessions act as a surrogate

extended family that helps to sustain and complete the aggregate self. It seems likely that possessions may play similar roles in other immigrant groups.

## SUMMARY AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

Both Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) and Belk (1985) note that there are benign as well as malignant forms of materialism. Which form our attachment to possessions takes depends upon a number of factors. Generally possessions that are used to symbolize our pasts and our attachments to people (e.g., gifts, heirlooms, mementos, trophies) are more benign than those that are used to claim status. They serve in these cases to provide security and act as transitional objects when encountering new environments. Emotional attachments to possessions can expand our sense of self, but they may also put this self in greater jeopardy. Attachments that are moderate in strength are likely to be more benign than those that are extreme enough to threaten our identity if they are lost or stolen. Erich Fromm (1976, p. 96) once asked, "If I am what I have and what I have is lost, who then am I?" And when emotional involvement with possessions takes away from our emotional involvement with other people and with cultivating our own skills and experiences, a more malignant form of materialism is implicated.

The measurement of extended self, materialism, and favorite possessions represents a beginning in the effort to understand our attachments to our material environment. A beginning has also been made in exploring cross-cultural differences in these phenomena, including emerging patterns of materialism in the contemporary Third World. Given the rapidity with which consumer culture is spreading in the world, further cross-cultural and longitudinal work on object attachment and materialism is imperative. Recent changes toward more market-driven economies in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China are also changes toward consumer culture and provide key opportunities for examining the impact of consumer culture on human well-being. Such events, coupled with increasingly international distribution of many branded consumer goods and increasingly simultaneous exposure to consumption trends around the world (significantly aided by Western and Japanese television programs, films, and tourists), also help nurture a globalized culture in which we all want to possess the same consumer desiderata. In addition to the potential decline of cultural uniqueness in such globalization, such inflamed consumer desires also threaten to deplete nonrenewable resources at an increasing rate. Thus, a highly salient issue in consumer attachment involves conservation and the potential for reducing our desires to consume and own, while preserving or enhancing willingness to care for our material environment. Perhaps one benefit of globalization will be increased feelings of stewardship for resources elsewhere in the world. But at the same time, expanded desire for consumer goods may create increased pressure on the world's resources. The critical tension here seems to involve large-scale

aggregate self-emphasis versus small-scale individual self-emphasis. Receptivity to rental and other forms of shared ownership may also depend on the strength of aggregate identity, while voluntarily simpler lifestyles depend upon our willingness to be less attached to fewer possessions. Efforts to precipitate such lifestyle changes can benefit from additional research into attachment and the extended self.

Other practical issues involve decisions about what to preserve and save. Anthropological museums have largely ceased to be regarded as necessary for anthropological research, but may still be important to aggregate sense of self. When these museums are filled with artifacts from other cultures, a further issue involves just whose self should be served by these collections. And if individuals can become pathologically addicted to collecting and hoarding possessions, cannot societies also become too committed to preserving artifacts of the past? While attachment is a straightforward concept, its potential consequences are not. Broadly conceived research is needed in order to consider the full impact of our attachments to various objects in our material environment.

In addition to descriptive and prescriptive work, it will be important to provide a deeper conceptual understanding of the role that attachment to possessions plays in our lives. Sacralization, singularization, fetishism, and displaced meaning all offer promising beginnings toward more complete theoretical understandings. The blend of qualitative and quantitative work that has characterized object attachment research to date seems a promising combination that should be continued. The qualitative work is best able to explicate the feelings and meanings of object attachments, while the quantitative work is best able to detect broad patterns of object attachments and their relationships to such key variables as media exposure, happiness, and changes in political and economic structures. Finally, a broader awareness by researchers from diverse disciplines can result in the synergistic integration of studies of place attachment and possession attachment. As suggested by increased geographic mobility, increased divorce rates, and increased disposability of products and packaging, we may be becoming detached from our material environment. Alternatively, we may be only serially attached where we were once more permanently attached. These dissolutions of various attachments may well be interdependent. In a society of disposable products, why not disposable people and disposable places as well? Only by researching attachment in the broad context of the total material environment can we hope to detect and investigate such problems.

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# Childhood Place Attachments

LOUISE CHAWLA

## INTRODUCTION

There is a long history of cultural assumptions regarding children's special affinity or bond for certain places, much of it antedating modern psychology. Within psychology, the subject is more ambiguous. The term *attachment* evokes a long history of theory and research that has measured the degree to which young children seek to keep a primary caretaker in sight and hearing, showing distress at separation and joy at reunion not merely for the sake of the satisfaction of physical needs but for the value of her presence (Maccoby & Masters, 1970; Sears, 1972). Much of this work has been inspired by the psychoanalytic theory of object relations. A naive reader might suppose that this literature explores people's relations with objects—with things—which must involve things in their places; but a reader schooled in psychological jargon knows that in this case "object" almost invariably means "mother." Yet the confusion is not merely naive, as object relations theorists have usually assumed that a child's feelings for places and things develop as an extension of its relations with its mother. As a result, it has not been clear whether place attachments should be considered merely secondary effects of social attachments, or whether they have an independent existence.

One consequence of this confusion is that the subject of childhood place attachments has never been directly defined and investigated. It has been indirectly discussed under the terms "affiliation" (Moore, 1986), "bonding" (Pearce, 1977), "preference" (see review in this chapter), "rootedness," and

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"sense of place" (Olwig, 1982). But before this chapter there has been no previous attempt to bring these discussions together. If we borrow the criteria used to measure social attachments, we have the following provisional definition: children are attached to a place when they show happiness at being in it and regret or distress at leaving it, and when they value it not only for the satisfaction of physical needs but for its own intrinsic qualities.

These ambiguities in psychological theory are related to the cultural history. Freud and the other theorists that this chapter will review have inherited two great contending Western traditions regarding the value of childhood and the nature of the external world. On one side is the view that the child is the carrier of original sin . . . on the other that the child is the guardian of redeeming innocence. Freud belonged to both traditions, but he emphasized the first. He taught that it is necessary to recover and decode childhood memories in order to achieve the greatest possible adult maturity; but the message that he read into these memories was anything but innocent. In opposition to people who dignified memories of a childhood sense of oneness with the world with religious significance, he considered any clinging to qualities of childhood feeling, like any clinging to religion, regressive. He believed that for civilization to advance, childhood feeling must be subordinated to adult reason (Freud, 1930/1961). His justification was his view of nature. In contrast to Platonic and Judeo-Christian teachings that nature is a divinely animated creation, Freud believed that everything will one day be explained through the equations of physics and chemistry. This faith continues to pervade the scientific study of the child, where it is epitomized by Piaget's (1929) analysis of how children discard prelogical projections of feeling into the world as they progress to logicomathematical thinking.

It is evident that emotional bonds or attachments to a purely random physical world must be delusional; therefore, childhood feelings for the world have been largely a nonsubject in psychology. But there is another tradition that has contributed to persisting popular assumptions about children's relations with the world, which has even infiltrated psychology. In the face of the rising prestige of secular science and its mechanical world view, poets assembled a rejoinder that simultaneously protected the sanctity of nature, childhood experience, and the inspired imagination. A belief that childlike vision is redemptive because children have a special bond with nature, receptively absorbing its inspirational patterns, became a major theme of Romantic philosophy. Countless poems and novels have echoed the famous lines of Wordsworth (1947, p. 279):

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem  
Apparelled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.

. . . . .

At length the Man perceives it die away,  
And fade into the light of common day.

Later in this chapter, these lines will be heard echoing in the theories of Schachtel (1959) and Searles (1959), who said that we discover the world and ourselves through childlike spontaneity, but that too often as we age we exchange this fresh vision for utilitarian conformity. This idea will also be heard in the autobiographical conclusions of Cobb (1959), who said that creative thinkers return to childhood memories of "a sense of some profound continuity with natural processes . . . in order to renew the power and impulse to create at its very source" (p. 539).

There is an economic and geographical side to this cultural story. The Romantics idealized nature and childhood at the same time that rural villages were being engulfed by industrial cities, pastoral common lands enclosed for private estates, and children sent to labor in mines and factories. According to the historian Williams (1973), eighteenth- and nineteenth-century society turned to childhood and nature as refuges from the pressures of industrialization and urbanization. It came to expect that children would become attached to beautiful natural places and that memories of these childhood experiences would be restorative.

By the early twentieth century, an image of the child in the city neighborhood came to stand beside the child in nature. Ward (1975) and Nasaw (1985) have chronicled the emergence of an urban ideal in which old city quarters endeared themselves for intimate social relations, sensory excitement, activity, diversity, and challenge. They have argued that this nineteenth- and twentieth-century tendency to idealize personal history has been matched by actual landscape changes: that just as we have feared losing the vividness and spontaneity of childhood experience as we age, the landscape has been losing accessibility, diversity, and intimacy as it has become increasingly privatized, uniform, and dominated by traffic.

Kagan (1984) and Erikson (1959) have diagnosed this nostalgia in the psychology of attachment itself. They have suggested that war, nuclear armament, economic instability, and geographic mobility have made concerns about attachment, trust, and anxiety central to twentieth-century developmental theory. According to their analysis, psychological theory has projected onto the child our general cultural nostalgia for a safer, more stable world.

In addition to these themes, the pages ahead will echo our culture's stress on individual autonomy and environmental mastery, which have fueled the scientific, geographical, and social upheavals that have given us cause for nostalgia. As a culture, we are like the toddlers observed in attachment research: looking backwards to a trusted origin *because* we have achieved the autonomy of standing on our own feet and striking outwards with adventurous mobility. Ladd (1977) has suggested that one way we resolve this ambivalence is by recreating aspects of our childhood homes in the distant communities where we resettle.

This chapter will explore the interplay of these themes in four diverse literatures: psychoanalytic theory, which has considered the role of places and things within their social context; environmental autobiography, which has evaluated places saved through the sieve of memory; behavior mapping, which

has observed where children and adolescents congregate; and favorite place analyses, which have explored the reasons for their preferences. Before considering these literatures individually, however, the chapter will begin by outlining how they combine to suggest the following sequence of developing attachments.

## SOURCES OF DEVELOPING ATTACHMENT

Before discussing this synthesis, it is important to note that it describes positive attachments in healthy development. According to Figure 1, for example, a preschool child will be happily attached to a place where it finds secure nurturance and where it can explore and at least temporarily appropriate attractive things: a small but dependable, self-affirming, enticing world. Yet in the basic sense that our place forms the circumference of our experience, we are attached to it for better or for worse. Therefore, there is a shadow side to Figure 1 composed of disrupted development within frustrating or frightening places. The importance of a stable home base, at a minimum, is suggested by high measures of emotional disturbance among homeless children (Bassuk, Rubin, & Lauriat, 1986). In severe cases of disturbance, the developmental sequence breaks down and people become trapped in an infantile confusion over the boundaries between their own identity and the external world (Searles, 1959). On the level of memory also, our places of origin shape who we are whether we like it or not (Chawla, 1985).

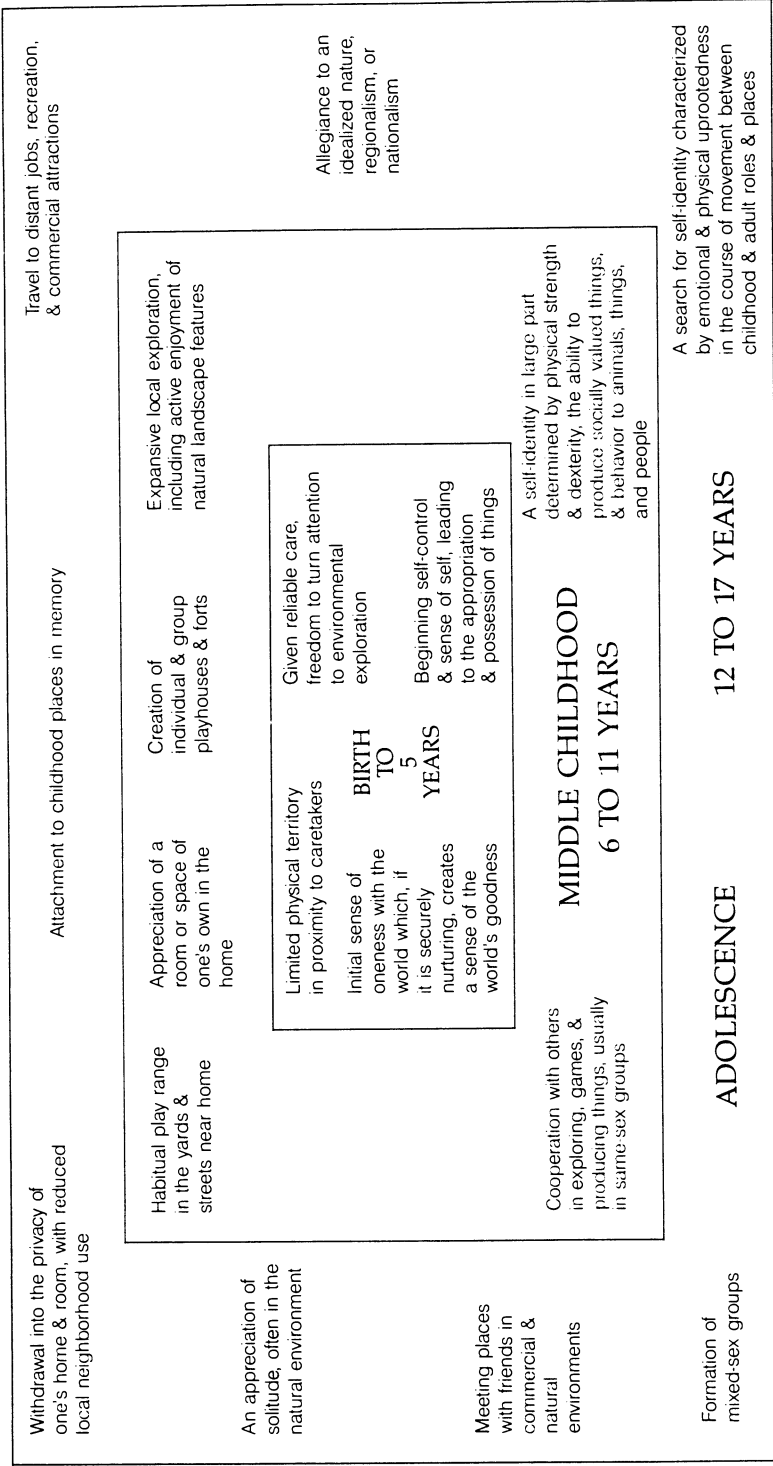
Figure 1 shows that healthy place attachments balance the inward hold of an intimate familiar center with the outward attractions of an expanding world. It also suggests that children's and adolescents' success in coordinating these inward and outward pulls depends upon the quality of their social relationships, their sense of identity, and their places.

On a physical level, attachment can be measured by children's local geographies. Constrained by family rules and schedules and their own limited independence, children are literally "attached" to a succession of expanding local places, with their home at the center. The geographer Hart (1978) has noted that these physical boundaries are defined by family negotiations in which the child and its caretakers balance connection and separation in the context of the child's perceived abilities and the environment's attractions and risks.

Figure 1 indicates a reversal in social and territorial behavior from early to middle childhood to adolescence. The behavior mapping and favorite place analyses that this chapter will review show a sequence from close-to-home, mixed-sex play in the preschool years, to expansive engagement with the local landscape in the company of same-sex friends in middle childhood, to the formation of new mixed-sex groups and a retrenchment in visible neighborhood use as adolescents turn inward into the privacy of their homes and outward to distant attractions. If these empirical results are compared with

# INWARD PULLS

# OUTWARD ATTRactions



# SELF-IDENTITY

# SOCIAL AFFILIATIONS

Figure 1. Sources of developing place attachments in early and middle childhood and adolescence.

psychoanalytic attachment theory, they look like the negative and print of each other. According to Sears's (1972) review of social attachments, their maximum expression occurs between the years of birth through age 3 in the small child's attachment to its mother, decaying during the latency period of middle childhood, to find new expression in attachments to a love partner and eventually to one's own children in adolescence and adulthood. Behavior mapping and place preferences, in contrast, show the most extensive neighborhood use during the latency years. The physical environment, in other words, appears to loom largest in children's experience when signs of social attachment diminish.

One explanation for this pattern is that psychoanalytic theory has emphasized sexual attachments, and therefore it has focused upon puberty and pre-Oedipal and Oedipal relations with parents, neglecting same-sex friendships. These friendships, however, appear to be a vital ingredient of middle childhood place experience. Moore (1986, pp. 57–58) has suggested that just as friendships spur environmental exploration at this age, exploration may intensify friendships. Therefore it is important to distinguish social relationships that deflect or draw attention to environmental encounters.

In a study of environmental autobiographies by this author (Chawla, 1986), the most frequent source of attachment to a remembered childhood home was its association with loved family members. Although preschool children cannot explain the basis for their feelings, it is likely that during these years when they are confined to the indoors or immediate home surroundings in close proximity to caretakers, their place experience is strongly colored by the quality of these primary social bonds. In adolescence, a geographic division between the home and increasingly distant community places corresponds to the adolescent's ambiguous social status—and occasional ambiguous feelings—about being partly a young person still attached to the family and partly an independent adult. Attachments also become more conceptual at this age, as some places represent idealized identities or a now-vanished childhood. It is in middle childhood, when self-identity and social reputation require displays of physical strength and dexterity, that the value of the local environment appears to be most directly determined by its opportunities for individual challenge and group play.

According to Figure 1, places provide three types of satisfaction: security, social affiliation, and creative expression and exploration. Security, which must be a primary feature of place experience in the preschool years, probably remains a taken-for-granted prerequisite. But in the empirical sections that follow, the sources of satisfaction that stand out in immediate experience and memory are opportunities for social or creative self-development. The places listed in Figure 1 support developing self-identity in either of two ways: by affording conventional settings where young people can try out predefined social roles, or by offering unprogrammed space. The degree to which the environment supports the practice of social roles can be measured in terms of the availability of diverse behavior settings (Barker & Schoggen, 1973). This quality may be particularly important to adolescence. Lynch (1977), working



with young adolescents around the world, found that their attachment to their community, measured through pride in identification and a desire to continue to live there after growing up, corresponded to the degree to which adults accepted them as vital functioning members. At every age, there is also a need for undefined space where young people can formulate their own worlds: for free space where preschoolers can manipulate the environment and play "let's pretend" in preparation for middle childhood demands; for hideouts and playhouses indoors and out where school-age children can practice independence; and for public hangouts and private refuges where adolescents can test new social relationships and ideas.

According to Lynch (1981), emotional as well as physical claims to a place depend upon the following set of spatial rights: the right of presence, of being in a place; of use and action; of appropriation; of modification; and of disposition. Lynch has noted that young people's enjoyment of these rights extends only as far as adults' toleration, or ignorance, of their activities. In conventional settings, these rights are conveyed through adult acceptance. In creative settings, they are conferred by the place's malleability and remoteness from adults. In the sections that follow, these qualities of acceptance and freedom will emerge as salient dimensions of cherished places.

### PLACE ATTACHMENTS IN OBJECT RELATIONS THEORY

In psychoanalytic theory, the subject of attachment comes under the heading of object relations, which consist of the developing child's external and internal, imagined relations with significant people and things (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). According to Freud (1905/1953), satisfaction consists in the release of drive tensions, and objects become significant because they make satisfaction possible. As an infant or child associates a set of conditions with repeated experiences of satisfaction, an image of the satisfying object coalesces and the drive becomes invested, or cathected, in it. Thus the child becomes attached to the object. At different points in his career, Freud posited a variety of drives, but he emphasized the sexual. He believed that different parts of the body become erotogenic as sexual libido moves through a biologically fixed sequence of phases. Therefore the character of satisfying objects changes with each libidinal phase.

Freud's ideas have had several important consequences for environmental theory. In his own analyses, the primary objects that satisfy the sexual drive are human, and nonhuman objects gain secondary importance through association: houses, for example, subconsciously represent the body and in particular woman's body; woods and gardens, female sexual organs; towers and engines, male sexual organs. According to Freud's only analysis of a child (1909/1955), these associations begin very early. By this code of symbols, relations with places and things mask repressed human interests. Yet despite this emphasis on human relations, in theory Freud left the term "object" open to

signify *anything* which a drive targets. A few analysts have taken advantage of this fluid reference to argue that relations with the physical world can have a primary value of their own.

One of the first theorists to develop this argument was Schachtel (1959). Presenting impressive clinical and experimental evidence, Schachtel observed that, in contrast to Freud's conception of pleasure as the cessation of tension, the young of all higher species show an eager appetite for sensory exploration and discovery, which serves not only survival but intrinsic satisfaction. Whereas Freud saw in the infant nursing at the breast a longing for quiescence, Schachtel read a different message: that just as the newborn *turns toward* its mother for care, so the child and adult continue to actively turn toward the external world. Contrary to Freud's belief that reality generally frustrates the desire for pleasure, he argued that the perception of reality itself can be pleasurable. When a baby chews its rattle, bangs its spoon, tears paper, or sinks its face in a pet's fur, it is not disguised sexual aggression but a show of intrinsic delight in contact with external reality; and this pleasure in the discovery of reality is the primary motive behind play, learning, and love for the world.

Schachtel related these claims to a detailed analysis of two perceptual modes and types of connection to the world. It can be argued that they form the foundation for two distinct types of place attachment. In *autocentric*, or self-centered perception, sensations and emotions of general pleasure or discomfort fuse. In this case things are known for their value and use for us. This unthinking embeddedness in a serviceable world is similar to Freud's conception of pleasure as satisfied quiescence; but Schachtel also offered an alternative in the form of *allocentric*, or other-centered perception, which opens itself to an object, trying to discover the characteristics that define its general form and its unique identity, which brings an intellectual pleasure.

Schachtel believed that healthy development proceeds from predominantly autocentric to increasingly allocentric modes of perception. The infant begins by looking, touching, and tasting for the sake of pleasurable sensations, but the growing child takes an increasing interest in understanding objects' varied characteristics. In play in particular, the different aspects of an object are discovered and integrated. Ideally, said Schachtel (1959, p. 157), "The embeddedness principle yields to the transcendental principle of openness toward the world and of self-realization which takes place in encounter with the world." At its best, maturity preserves an openness and delight in the properties of things. But too often, Schachtel regretted, age brings what he termed "secondary autocentricity." A person becomes embedded in a closed routine in which things are barely perceived at all except as objects-of-use, and convention and cliché define "reality."

According to Schachtel (p. 263), the necessary background to openness to the world is the satisfaction of physical needs and a mother's secure love. If a mother's love is dependable, a child can tolerate and even welcome uncertainty and newness in the environment. Otherwise, an unchanging environment becomes a critical substitute for secure mothering. Parents and teachers also

stifle the exploratory drive when they demand passivity or conformity as the price for approval.

Applied to the subject of attachment, Schachtel's ideas suggest two polar but complementary forms. A place can be valued precisely because it is so familiar that we do not need to think about it, because our sensations have fused into a general sense of comfort and utility. Alternatively, we can value the excitement of discovery that a place affords. Even in optimal development, we move back and forth between these two forms of experience as we move between changing places or moods. Insecurity and social pressures, however, may drive us to cling to the conventional and familiar at the expense of the new and challenging.

The only other psychoanalyst who has attempted to define developing person-environment relationships in their own right is Searles (1959), who asserted that "the nonhuman environment, far from being of little or no account to human personality development, constitutes one of the most basically important ingredients of human psychological existence" (pp. 5-6). Whereas object relations theorists have emphasized an infant's separation from its mother, Searles maintained that separation and individuation are a twofold process.

The human being is engaged, throughout his life span, in an unceasing struggle to differentiate himself increasingly fully, not only from his human, but also from his nonhuman environment, while developing, in proportion as he succeeds in these differentiations, an increasingly meaningful relatedness with the latter environment as well as with his fellow human beings. (p. 30)

Whereas Schachtel spoke in terms of the competing attractions of autocentric or allocentric experience, Searles spoke in terms of immersion in the environment or relatedness to an accurately differentiated environment.

According to Searles, the essence of movement from immaturity to maturity is movement from a sense of oneness with the world to "an increasingly meaningful relatedness." In the spirit of object relations theory, he saw a process fraught with anxieties and risks—with a critical difference. On the most basic level, an infant separates from its mother at the moment it leaves the womb, and the rest of its life is spent in accommodating this reality. But the source of our anxieties about the nonhuman environment is that we can never cut the umbilical cord of our dependence on its air, water, food, and other materials, and at death our bodies dissolve back into it. Searles attributed the omission of serious consideration of person-environment relations in psychoanalytic theory to analysts' own anxieties in the face of this attachment. He noted that just as an infant's dependence on its mother is so absolute that it has great difficulty recognizing her independent existence in any form other than a taken-for-granted *object*, so, as individuals and a society, we have relegated the physical world to the status of "nothing but an object." Healthy place relationships, he argued, begin with our acknowledging all the ways in which we are inescapably attached to this primary bond.

Searles described a simple four-stage sequence in human relations with

the physical world. An initial lack of differentiation between the self and the world in infancy gradually gives way in early and middle childhood to a sturdy sense of personal identity, achieved in good part through interactions with the physical world. Adolescence is a period of ambivalence: given the challenge of accepting human nature as it is, there is a temptation to prefer intimacy with an idealized vision of nature to human intimacy. The acceptance of human uniqueness allows a mature relatedness with the nonhuman world, which expresses itself through "a large, lifelong measure of open interest in, of seeking and questioning, the meanings which this facet of one's life holds" (Searles, 1959, p. 101).

Searles never explicitly addressed the subject of place attachment, but in effect he described a progression from immature to mature attachments. He believed that mature individuation does not exclude occasional "feelings of intense relatedness, and even oneness, with the totality of one's environment" (p. 128); but like Schachtel, he believed that the overriding characteristic of maturity is open attentiveness to surrounding people and things. It was his faith that, "The more our relatedness to it is freed from perceptual distortions in the form of projection, transference, and so on—the more truly meaningful, the more solidly emotionally satisfying, is our experience with this environment" (p. 115). The benefits which he attributed to this relatedness—"a sense of peace, a sense of stability, of continuity, and of certainty" (p. 122)—suggest attachment at its best. Again like Schachtel, he attributed freedom to become engaged in the outer world to responsive, noncoercive parenting; and he considered the alternative to this aliveness to be a deadening entrapment in conventional attitudes to the world.

Whereas Schachtel and Searles revised Freud's pleasure principle by arguing that environmental discovery provides intrinsic pleasures, Erikson (1963), a protégé of Freud, never overtly challenged his teacher. Nevertheless, he gave so much attention to the quality of social interactions that he effectively modified Freud's biological focus. In proposing how each new libidinal phase introduces a new psychosocial challenge, he outlined the social context of developing relations with the physical world. In the case of the first libidinal phase, for example, he accepted Freud's claim that satisfaction of hunger through the oral erogenous zone creates the first significant object—the mother's breast; but he added that the treatment that an infant receives at this time leaves a lifelong residue of basic trust or mistrust with respect to both society and the physical world: a sense that the universe is essentially benevolent or essentially dangerous and frustrating. Applied to the subject of place relations, Erikson's model suggests the foundation of positive, robust attachments: a basic sense that the world is good, acquired in infancy; delight in the world's satisfactions, secured through early childhood autonomy and initiative and middle childhood industry; adolescent identification with one's region and country; a constructive commitment to create and preserve a good world, made through adult intimacy and generativity; and a final profound acceptance of one's fate in space and time. Yet Erikson emphasized that we are never entirely free of the other shadow side of life's possibilities. In terms of attachment, ever-present

alternative possibilities are fear of the world's unmanageable dangers, compensated by obsessive attempts to overcontrol places and things as well as people; fanatical nationalism and regionalism; and a greedy appropriation of places and things regardless of others' needs.

Another class of theorists have maintained Freud's commitment to biological explanations of attachment, but they have applied it directly to environmental experience. According to Shepard (1967), human place attachments reflect our evolutionary history. We prefer to grow up and to raise children among open lawns dotted with trees, for example, because this landscape mimics the savannahs and forests where our hunter-gatherer ancestors evolved: the lawns are like the open prospects our ancestors once scanned for prey, the trees like the groves where they found shelter. Cobb (1959) and Pearce (1977) have argued that the middle years from 6 to 12 are genetically programmed for exploration of the world and bonding with nature, as these are the years when our species originally learned the wilderness skills and intuitions necessary for survival.

As a whole, object relations theory is rich in suggestions regarding children's developing connections with the external world, but these suggestions remain largely speculative and untested. Some claims, such as that attachment and exploration can be explained as instinctual behaviors rather than as the effect of positive reinforcement, are essentially untestable. Other claims, such as the relationship between secure parenting and environmental feeling, or Searles's and Erikson's proposed sequence of attachments, invite research. To evaluate their validity, it is necessary to turn to more empirical literatures on autobiographical memory and child behavior.

## REMEMBERED PLACES

There are two empirical sources of insight into early place attachments, which correspond to this chapter's two "reasons for being." Place attachments can be important because they contribute to the present quality of a child's life, or because they leave enduring effects after childhood is over. The first concern, which dictates research with children themselves, will be reviewed in the next section. The second concern, which evaluates the adults that children become, will be considered here.

The enduring value of childhood places has been studied retrospectively through the medium of environmental autobiographies, or personal histories that record important places through drawing, writing, or interviews. They present adult attitudes to childhood places, rather than children's direct experience. But this backward glance is an important dimension of attachment. Pleasure in reliving a place in memory and nostalgia over its loss attest that lasting attachments have been formed. Memory must be consulted with the caution that it transforms as well as informs, however. As Rivlin (1978, p. 2) has warned, autobiographies' "form, arrangement, and qualities cannot be taken

as the direct experience of the person as child, or of any children." Nevertheless, autobiographical memory carries some advantages of its own. It is our primary medium of insight into the personal meaning of the past, and its challenge of giving life a coherent pattern, presenting who one essentially is, encourages the careful description of places and feelings that are central to self-identity. Another advantage is that attachment is a difficult emotion to describe—even for those who research it!—and adults have a greater reservoir of words available to express feelings that they may have stored up inarticulately as a child. Therefore, autobiography serves as a testimony to enduring emotional investments and as a selective yet suggestive perspective on the past.

Riley (1979) has noted that several motives have prompted designers, planners, and design researchers to turn to this window to the past. By examining their own backgrounds and how they tend in their work to perpetuate elements of settings where they were happy as children, they can guard against imposing their private biases on clients. By examining clients' backgrounds, they can learn how childhood experiences have shaped others' enduring environmental pleasures and satisfactions. By discovering recurring characteristics of happily remembered places, they can attempt to replicate these resources for present-day children. They have turned to autobiographical material, in sum, to find clues to the physical elements that foster place attachments in themselves, in adult clients, and in child users.

Given these purposes, most of these studies have focused upon places' physical characteristics. Before reviewing this work, it should be noted that physical qualities that are under a designer's control are only one dimension of place experience. When this author (Chawla, 1986) analyzed feelings for childhood places in 38 randomly selected twentieth-century autobiographies, social and economic dimensions appeared to be at least as important. Seven forms of environmental memory emerged: a few authors barely mentioned physical settings or entirely rejected their places of origin as dangerous, filthy, chaotic, or barren; but most authors cherished some place that was central to their self-image. The four forms of attachment that emerged, and the contexts in which they occurred, are summarized in Table 1.

The most common form of attachment was simple affection for a place associated with family love and security. Its value was defined by family ties and cultural roots, embedded within a sense that "this is my place in the world" when that place was comfortably embraced. This merger of sensation with comfort and security fits Schachtel's definition of autocentricity, but rather than unthinking immersion, it often showed painstaking attention to details, as if reconstruction of the stage of the past could restore departed loved ones.

In transcendent memories, a place was remembered as an unforgettable living presence in itself, exciting all five senses and inspiring exuberance, calm, or awe. These memories correspond to those described in an often-cited article by Cobb (1959) on "the ecology of imagination in childhood" in which she claimed that, "In these memories the child appears to experience both a sense of discontinuity, an awareness of his own unique separateness and identity, and also a continuity, a renewal of relationship with nature as process" (p. 539).

TABLE 1. FOUR FORMS OF CHILDHOOD PLACE ATTACHMENT<sup>a</sup>

1. *Affection*. Fondness for places to which we trace our roots, which are associated with happiness and security. It incorporates social definitions of the environment, and there is a parallel between warmth of feeling for the place and for the people in it.
2. *Transcendence*. A feeling of dynamic relationship with the outer world, of a profound sense of connection with nature. It transcends social convention by expressing one-to-one communion with the environment.
3. *Ambivalence*. Identification with a place of origin, complicated by the tension that it embodies family weaknesses or social injustice and stigma. It cannot be rejected because it is where one's personality and perspective developed and there are deep ties of affection to it, but neither can it be comfortably embraced.
4. *Idealization*. Beginning in adolescence, identification with an environmental abstraction rather than a concretely lived-in-place. It may be a geographic region, as in patriotism, or a realm of the imagination. This mentally inhabited world becomes an intensely felt symbol of personal desires and values.

<sup>a</sup>Based on Chawla, 1986.

This claim, it may be noted, conforms to the psychoanalytic prescription that healthy development is a process of separation and individuation that allows relatedness—ideas with which Cobb, analysand to a prominent child analyst, would have been familiar. Transcendent memories also conform to Schachtel's category of allocentric perception in which self-realization occurs through vivid encounters with the world. As both Schachtel and Searles have predicted, authors who recorded these happy encounters also recorded some secure source of love.

As psychoanalytic theory would also predict, attachments can bring pain as well as pleasure. When a growing child observed that the place that it was bound to through family ties was stigmatized by society as a ghetto of poverty or racial inferiority, affection gave way to ambivalence. In this case tenderness became mixed with a sense of vulnerability and entrapment.

In adolescence, idealization sometimes emerged as another reaction to a sense of entrapment. As part of a quest for identity, some adolescents invested an existing or imagined place with elaborate national, religious, or racial values, and mentally inhabited this idealized place as an alternative to inadequate actual circumstances.

All four forms of attachment show acute responsiveness to political and socioeconomic contexts. In transcendent or affectionate memories, a comfortable sense of belonging in a place and freedom to lay claim to it always conformed to its legal status as property: it was wild or public land open to anyone's claim or it belonged to the child's family. Ambivalence resulted when parents struggled to maintain their home and land despite poverty and prejudice. Idealized places served as refuges from adolescent political or social alienation. These results support Lynch's (1981) claim that the prerequisite for satisfying place investments are basic spatial rights that ensure emotional as well as physical freedom.

This theme appears even in studies that have focused on physical features. Despite samples of diverse ages, professions, and nationalities (Chawla, 1990; Cooper Marcus, 1978; Dovey, 1990; Lukashok & Lynch, 1956; Sobel, 1990), analyses of places remembered with particular frequency or intensity show a remarkable convergence of characteristics. They suggest that if designers want to make childhood places more memorable, they need to enhance access to the outdoors, to nature, and to freedom in the environment.

In each study, outdoor environments claimed attention in memory out of all proportion to the actual amount of time spent there. Happily remembered places were also repeatedly associated with a sense of range and freedom: the child felt free to roam fields, woods, enticing city streets (or even storm sewers), and to physically manipulate the environment. As Cooper Marcus (1978) has noted, the emphasis upon the outdoors and freedom coincide. Indoor environments are adult domains where children are bound by rules of order, neatness, and propriety. "Therefore children seek the outdoors from an early age," she proposed, "because it allows them a definite freedom, if not in territorial range, then at least in the intensity with which they interact with, manipulate, and explore the environment" (p. 36).

The same argument can be made for the salience of nature: children can explore and manipulate the natural environment with a liberty denied them amid constructed places and possessions. Noting the recurrence of nature even in city recollections, Lukashok and Lynch (1956) have suggested this link.

A child's play is most satisfactory when it allows him the greatest opportunity to manipulate his environment according to his needs: to imagine, to create, and hide. A well differentiated world, and one that is plastic to his hands and mind, is his desire. That is perhaps why so many people remember with pleasure the overgrown lot, thick brush and woods. (p. 145)

In the studies by Cooper Marcus (1978), Dovey (1990), and Sobel (1990), hideouts, forts, and small leftover spaces in the home or outdoors were frequently remembered with great fondness. Here, too, their outstanding quality appears to be that children can appropriate these spaces in undisturbed privacy and shape them to their will.

Many respondents quoted in these studies personified the environment as a benevolent spirit, such as a man who reported that his boyhood woods "seemed old, kind and wise" (Cooper Marcus, 1978, p. 37), or another who recalled a favorite room "that shared so much of myself, one of my best friends" (Dovey, 1990, p. 15). According to psychoanalytic theory, a child eventually incorporates its special objects of attachment into itself, creating an internalized object that serves, among other functions, as "a source of internal security and resource, invoked in times of stress and isolation" (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983, p. 11). In striking parallel, when this author (Chawla, 1990) examined the lasting benefits attributed to happily remembered childhood places, the most common bequest was that they form an internal center of stability and calm. Other authors echoed the words of C. Day-Lewis, that to treasured childhood places he owed "a certain fund of calm within myself . . . which I am able to draw upon in an emergency."



Despite these parallels between human and environmental objects of attachment, remembered places cannot simply be explained as substitutes for human security, for they *are* the world that the child moves out into as it moves away from parents. At one and the same time, they satisfy the drive for outward exploration and mastery and the need for a secure base. The “fund of calm” that can be mobilized in an emergency, it should be noted, is as much the child’s achievement as the place’s gift, for the discovery and creation of personal places testify to growing independence and skill. Autobiographical accounts also show that places of attachment are often valued precisely because they are distant from human relationships. The opportunity to be quiet and subdued or physically vigorous away from a parent’s presence is often remembered as a generous privilege. Places also serve as refuges from interpersonal tensions, uncomplicated by the conflicts and demands that social relations often involve.

### REPORTED AND PRESENTED PLACES

The preceding sections have been theoretical or retrospective. In order to assess their relevance to actual children, it is necessary to observe and talk with children. Do they move out to explore the physical world more actively when they enjoy secure attachments to caretakers, as psychoanalytic theory has predicted? Do they particularly prefer outdoor play, natural landscape elements, and intimate private hideouts, as adults recall? Do adolescents begin to express attachments to mental places? The empirical research that this section will review indicates that these are not purely adult biases, but that they have a basis in fact. In addition, this work highlights the importance of the street and the home.

This section must be read with the caution that in moving from psychoanalytic predictions, to recollection, to empirical research with actual children, in a certain sense the subject of place attachments becomes more rather than less elusive. Attachment has been a major psychoanalytic topic, and fond reminiscence is itself a measure of lasting emotional ties; but no one has questioned children directly regarding their place attachments—perhaps wisely so, given the subject’s intangible nature. The two major empirical methods that have approached the subject indirectly have been behavior mapping and favorite place analyses. Each method sheds insight on one facet of place experience, but each has its limitations.

In observational studies, researchers drive or walk through an area, recording each appearance of a child. Sex, estimated age, and activity are also often recorded. The resulting data about where children congregate may be taken as a measure of place preference—with the caution that it is a one-sided measure that records visible public places at the expense of private indoor or hard-to-detect outdoor retreats. It obscures the type of solitary experiences that are often emphasized in autobiographies, and it fails to distinguish quantity and quality of time, as it does not disclose whether a child freely chose a place, or what he or she feels about being there.

To avoid some of these problems, a few researchers (Coates & Bussard, 1974; Hart, 1979) have given children aerial photographs of their locality and asked them to trace all the places where they go. What this method loses in objectivity, it gains in subjective evaluation. It gives subjects a chance to identify hidden or interior places and to discuss their reasons for their choices.

Another dimension of information comes from favorite place analyses, which have been based upon interviews, essays, or child-led expeditions. They have the advantage of recording children's spontaneous evaluations, but the method shapes the results here too. Hart (1979) found that when he interviewed children in school regarding their 10 favorite places, they reported a high proportion of social centers, such as friends' houses, whereas child-led walks produced a much higher proportion of locations valued for exploration and physical action. When children are asked to draw or write, their responses are of course constrained by their skills at these tasks. Finally, in evaluating both favorite place analyses and behavior maps, it is important to remember that results reflect available resources, not ideal opportunities.

Turning to behavior maps or favorite place analyses for insights also begs a larger question: what is the relationship between place use, place preference, and attachment? No one has simultaneously measured these three aspects of child-environment relationships, so for now the question must remain open. Attachments, it is assumed, accrue over time; therefore, behavior maps that show extent of use are significant. Because we also expect that attachments will be stronger for places where we feel happy, satisfied, and secure rather than uncomfortable, bored, or frightened, favorite place analyses are essential. If both approaches produce converging results, we may expect that places that children use heavily and like heartily foster developing attachments.

Table 2 on place use and Table 3 on place preference summarize the results of these two methods. Individually, they are the basis of several of the observations in Figure 1 on "Sources of Developing Attachments"; in combination they show noteworthy similarities and contrasts.

The studies listed in Table 2 substantiate the previously reported rule that children shift from mixed-sex close-to-home play in the preschool years, to extensive use of the local terrain with same-sex friends in middle childhood, to diminished visible neighborhood use in adolescence. Three aspects of these studies have become truisms in child-environment research: that school-age children are the heaviest users of the outdoor landscape; that playgrounds receive relatively little use; and that close-to-home streets, sidewalks, and yards conveniently serve play from the preschool years through middle childhood. By the standard of time alone, the home and its nearby surroundings are the area to which children are physically "attached."

Table 2 also suggests lower and upper age limits for behavior mapping. Few studies have included adolescents, and those that have found their quarry elusive, emerging mostly at night (Cooper Marcus, 1974), or seeking remote commercial attractions (Payne & Jones, 1976). This literature has also omitted children younger than 2, who never go far from caretakers' sides. For relevant work with this age group, it is necessary to turn to Ainsworth (1973),

TABLE 2. MOST FREQUENTLY USED OUTDOOR PLACES<sup>a</sup>

	Early childhood 2–5 years	Middle childhood 6–11 years	Adolescence 12–17 years
Streets, sidewalks	<i>Suburban</i> Auslander, Juhasz, & Carrasco, 1978 (sidewalks) Payne & Jones, 1976 (sidewalks) Shack, 1987 (cul-de-sacs)	<i>Urban</i> Brower & Williamson, 1974 Cooper Marcus, 1974 (internal paths) <i>Suburban</i> Aiello, Gordon & Farrell, 1974 Auslander <i>et al.</i> , 1978 Francis, 1984/85 Payne & Jones, 1976 Shack, 1987	<i>Urban</i> Cooper Marcus, 1974 (internal paths in the evenings)
Yards	<i>Suburban</i> Aiello <i>et al.</i> , 1974 Auslander <i>et al.</i> , 1978 Coates & Bussard, 1974 Payne & Jones, 1976	<i>Suburban/rural</i> Aiello <i>et al.</i> , 1974 Auslander <i>et al.</i> , 1978 Brower & Williamson, 1974 Hart, 1979	
Parks, public fields		<i>Suburban/rural</i> Francis, 1984/85 Hart, 1979 Payne & Jones, 1976	<i>Suburban</i> Payne & Jones, 1976 (preteens & young teens)
Playgrounds	<i>Suburban</i> Shack, 1987 (adjacent to housing)		
Shopping area			<i>Suburban</i> Payne & Jones, 1976 (older teens)

<sup>a</sup>Listed sites accounted for at least 15% of observations or were reported to be most frequently used.

who has tested psychoanalytic theories of attachment through cross-cultural observations of mother–infant interactions. Ainsworth found that infants' early behavior does appear to be mother-directed, to maintain attachment; it is also outer-directed, to explore the world. Young children repeatedly make forays out from their mother, even as they return to her as a secure base. Ainsworth also found that children with secure attachments devote greater attention to environmental exploration—as psychoanalytic theory has predicted.

A close reading of the studies in Table 2 shows consistent gender differences in place use. Moore and Young (1978), in a review of research which

TABLE 3. FAVORITE PLACES<sup>a</sup>

	Middle childhood 6–12 years	Adolescence 12–17 years
Natural landscapes (parks, undeveloped land, natural features)	<i>Urban</i> Gray & Brower, 1977 (boys) Homel & Burns, 1985 Moore, 1979, 1986 <i>Suburban/rural</i> Francis, 1988 Hart, 1979 Hester & McNally, 1988 Neperud, 1975 Schiavo, 1988 Sobel, 1989 Torell, 1979	<i>Urban</i> Lynch, 1977 Van Staden, 1984 <i>Suburban/rural</i> Eubanks Owens, 1988 Hester & McNally, 1988 Schiavo, 1988
Homesites (one's own home or friends' homes)	Gray & Brower, 1977 (girls) Hart, 1979 Neperud, 1975 (6-year-olds) Moore, 1979, 1986 Schiavo, 1987	Eubanks Owens, 1988 Hester & McNally, 1988 Lynch, 1977 Schiavo, 1987
Personal bedroom	Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981 Hart, 1979 Moore, 1986 Schiavo, 1987	Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981 Ladd, 1972 Lynch, 1977 Schiavo, 1987
Streets, paved surfaces	<i>Urban</i> Moore, 1979, 1986 <i>Suburban</i> Schiavo, 1988	<i>Urban</i> Lynch, 1977 <i>Suburban</i> Schiavo, 1988
Shops, restaurants, theaters	<i>Urban</i> Gray & Brower, 1977 (boys) <i>Rural</i> Hart, 1979	<i>Urban</i> Lynch, 1977 Van Staden, 1984 <i>Suburban</i> Schiavo, 1988
Recreational facilities (playing fields, swimming pools, roller rinks, clubs)	<i>Urban</i> Gray & Brower, 1977 (boys) <i>Rural</i> Hart, 1979	<i>Urban</i> Lynch, 1977 <i>Suburban</i> Schiavo, 1988 (13-year-olds)
Playgrounds	<i>Urban</i> Gray & Brower, 1977 (girls) Homel & Burns, 1985 Torell, 1979 (6-year-olds)	
Automobiles		<i>Suburban</i> Schiavo, 1988 (17-year-olds)

<sup>a</sup>Listed landscape elements were selected by at least 20% of the subjects or ranked among the top five aggregated choices.

remains the main source of information on this subject, found that after the age of 5 or 6, boys are observed outdoors more than girls and they are allowed to frequent and explore a greater range of places. Nevertheless, these authors also found that girls drew as many elements in maps of local places as boys did, suggesting that girls make up for their limited territorial range through a more intimate knowledge of their area.

For insights into the meaning of frequented places, it is necessary to turn to Table 3 on place evaluations. Most of the studies listed in Table 3 have gathered evaluations through interviews, but a few have analyzed essays and drawings (Neperud, 1975), or have combined interviews with map drawing and place expeditions (Hart, 1979; Moore, 1979, 1986). Most investigators have asked subjects to describe or show local outdoor places that they like or that are important to them. A few have drawn attention to the home (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Ladd, 1972; Schiavo, 1987, 1988). Judging from the absence of preschoolers in these studies, 6 appears to be the youngest possible age for qualitative research of this kind.

When Table 3 and Table 2 are compared, they show striking correspondences and differences between place preferences and place use. Studies of place use demonstrate the importance of the street and immediate home environment in children's lives. Studies of place preferences suggest that the natural landscapes and private places that linger in adult memories are already salient in childhood. In behavior mapping, children and adolescents are rarely observed to spend even as much as 15% of their time in neighborhood woods, fields, undeveloped waste places, or waterways, yet these are their most frequently elected favorite places. A comparison of the tables confirms Moore's (1979) distinction that there is a "functional realm" of actual place use, over which children have only limited control, and a "conceived realm" of values, sensory perception, and long-term memory that becomes evident as children draw and talk about the local places that are important to them.

The other place that escapes observers' eyes but that emerges as a favored refuge is the home, and in particular a private bedroom. In Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton's (1981) study of the meaning of home and personal possessions, children and adolescents elected their own room as the place where they felt most at home and were most likely to keep special objects. In Schiavo's (1987) study, it was often chosen as the place where subjects spent the most time, most liked to be, and could do whatever they wished. Inner-city black adolescent males interviewed for Ladd (1972), given the privilege of a personal bedroom, also named it as their place for retreat.

Despite these differences, both tables indicate a general pattern of a life centered in the home, at friends' houses, or at immediate site facilities at age 6, followed by an appreciation of diverse neighborhood resources in middle childhood, culminating in adolescent investments divided among the home again, private outdoor places, and commercial establishments. The two approaches also suggest similar gender differences. Favorite place analyses support the suggestion of Moore and Young (1978) that although girls are physically confined to a smaller home-based area than boys, they compensate by

more intimate knowledge and feeling. In the studies by Schiavo (1987) and Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981), boys tended to describe their homes in physical terms as objects of possession and achievement, whereas girls expressed stronger social and emotional ties.

Table 3 also suggests why behavior mapping is rarely effective beyond the ages of 11 or 12. If teenagers follow their preferences, they can be expected to be indoors in stores, recreational centers, or their home. Even when they are outdoors, according to Eubanks Owens's (1988) research and review, they seek out refuges where they can be alone or with a few friends: caves, trees, or summits where they can look out but be invisible to the rest of the world. Perhaps as valued as getting away is being on the way. In Schiavo's (1988) study, 48% of his 17-year-olds photographed and discussed their automobile as an important place that they cared about.

A final observation from qualitative research is the surprisingly early age at which reminiscence begins to play a significant role in defining place affiliations. Like others researching North American suburbs, Schiavo (1988) found that they largely fail adolescents: 93% of his subjects rated their verdant suburb a good place for children, but only 26% considered it a good place for teens. Yet there were no age differences in measures of liking for the neighborhood, as his adolescents often reported valuing local places purely for their associations with their past. A fruitful area for research in the future may be the collection of environmental nostalgia beginning at the age of 12!

One feature that is glaringly absent from favorite place lists is the city itself as a resource. Only the young residents of old Cracow and a cohesive Argentinian neighborhood, reported by Lynch (1977), expressed warm identification with their city. In part, this absence reflects the predominance of suburban and rural study sites and a choice of restrictive, low-income neighborhoods in some urban studies (Homel & Burns, 1985; Van Staden, 1984); but in part it may reflect real changes in modern cities. This absence contrasts sadly with the intensely relived urban adventures reported by autobiographers of earlier generations.

## DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

If the desire for nature, for congenial streets, and for spatial appropriation reflected nothing but adult nostalgia as revealed in autobiographies and popular images, they would be biases to avoid in constructing the buildings and communities in which children grow. A reassuring feature of the preceding empirical sections is that retrospective and immediate judgments largely coincide. Behavior mapping and favorite place analyses show that young people share these preferences. They congregate along street fronts where the action is and express appreciation for natural landscape features and private spaces.

It may be, as child environment researchers have argued (Hart, 1979; Moore, 1986; Wohlwill & Heft, 1987), that these preferences reflect universal

developmental needs. Yet it is difficult to separate the universal and the cultural. A major research gap is a lack of understanding of how children acquire the environmental values they express. What kind of messages do they receive—through social models, books, magazines, television, movies—regarding the sort of places they *should* be attached to, and what factors influence their interpretations?

Given an understanding of how young people learn environmental values, applied research to foster values can follow. The design research tradition of translating observations of place use into design and policy recommendations needs to be extended to include role models, activities, and place characteristics that encourage positive feelings. *Childhood's Domain* by Moore (1986), which explores how place "affiliations" and meanings accrue through "experiential-layering," illustrates one way to proceed. Before this step can be taken, however, essential groundwork needs to be done. Different forms of place attachment need to be defined and their significance needs to be discussed.

An interesting Danish project by Olwig (1982) illustrates some of the dilemmas and potential of this work. Applying concepts from Tuan (1980), Olwig argued that children have a natural rootedness to their place, in the sense of an unthinking passive merging with their milieu (autocentric attachment, to use Schachtel's terms), but they need to be brought from rootedness to a sense of place through education, which creates enough separation between the self and its surroundings to allow conscious appreciation (allocentric attachment, in Schachtel's terms). In Olwig's words:

The relationship of children to their environment seems to be characterized by rootedness. To encourage the development of a sense of place in the child is to provide the basis both for the understanding of the processes shaping its environment, and for the sense of personal concern which is necessary if it is to take an active interest in the future of its environment. (p. 40)

Believing that education is the key to reshaping tacit feeling into active interest, Olwig teamed up with a poet to involve 11- to 13-year-olds in travel, historical and archaeological research, and writing. He found that children expressed place feelings more effectively in poetry than in essays, and that in many essays their landscape lost its "celestial light" as they became more historically informed. The implications are that increased knowledge about the environment must not be confused with deepened feeling for it; that the arts need to be an integral part of efforts to intensify, articulate, or measure feelings; and that reliable cross-cultural measures of different qualities of attachment have yet to be developed.

This lack of measures indicates another major research shortcoming: nearly total lack of knowledge about the long-term effects of different qualities of place experience. As Moore (1986, p. 19) has asked, "Is it important that adults remember the places they knew as a child? . . . What is the difference between an adult who is able to record rich and memorable images, and someone who cannot?" This question remains almost entirely unaddressed. To approach it, child environment researchers will need to overcome the obstacle that past fieldwork (Hart, 1979; Moore, 1986; Sobel, 1989) has been carried out with

"experts": articulate children who demonstrate extensive, diversified outdoor ranges in introductory exercises. Almost nothing is known about the experience of less articulate children or those kept out of sight indoors. It is also important to consider the development of place feelings within the holistic context of the family system, social and economic conditions, and available environmental resources. Hart (1979) pioneered family research of this kind, but it has had little imitation.

A few small retrospective studies suggest some answers to the above questions. When Borden (1986), Chawla (1989), Peterson and Hungerford (1981), and Tanner (1980) interviewed environmentalists, most respondents attributed their commitment to a combination of two sources: many hours spent outdoors in a keenly remembered wild or semi-wild place in childhood or adolescence, and an adult who taught respect for nature. These results suggest that the combination of memories of a well-loved childhood place and an adult who reinforces its value fosters a generalized attachment to natural areas. There is a need for similar studies of city and town community leaders, with care to include comparison groups, which the previous studies have lacked.

According to Searles (1959), psychoanalysts have avoided the subject of place relationships due to anxiety over their dependence upon the physical world comparable to an infant's anxiety over its dependence on its mother, but mature place attachments require that we acknowledge our bond to our place. Psychology—even environmental psychology—has yet to take this step, preoccupied as it has been with other issues than resource use and abuse and the origins of environmental feelings and behavior. At a time when children are being born on a precariously degraded earth, the development of attitudes about this first basic attachment needs to be a primary research topic. The ultimate goal of child environment research needs to be to enlist upcoming generations in the creation and preservation of convivial places—places where human diversity and species diversity can coexist, where future generations of children can find good reasons to feel attached.

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# Environmental Memories

CLARE COOPER MARCUS

Appropriation, attachment, and identity refer collectively to the idea that people invest places with meaning and significance and act in ways that reflect their bonding and linkage with places. Appropriation means that the person is transformed in the process of appropriating the environment. (Werner, Altman, & Oxley, 1985, p. 5)

Why do I remember this house as the happiest in my life? I was never really happy there. But now I realize that it was the house wherein I began to read, wholeheartedly and with pleasure. It was the first house where bookshelves appeared as a part of the building. It is a house to which I return, in a recurrent dream. I go back to the house as I now am. I put into it my chairs, my pictures, but most of all my books. I rearrange the house from top to bottom: new curtains on the windows, new pictures on the walls. But somehow the old rooms are still there—like shadows seeping through. Indestructible. Fixed. (Brogan, 1980, p. 30)

## INTRODUCTION

Many individuals' most powerful memories revolve around *places*—the house where they grew up, the secret places of childhood and adolescence, the setting where they first fell in love, the neighborhood where they established their first home, the dwelling where they raised their children, the summer home they built in the woods, the garden they first nurtured. Such memories often form rich sources of inspiration—to poets, novelists, designers, home-

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makers. Sometimes, too, comparisons with much-loved places of the past create dissatisfaction and sadness in the present. Occasionally, if a person is in the business of creating environments for other people (architect, interior designer, landscape architect), his or her own memories may influence, inappropriately, the designs for other people.

In this chapter, we will examine environmental memories from several viewpoints: special places of childhood recalled by young design students; the reproduction of significant childhood settings in the adult home; relations with the current home as a replay of unresolved childhood problems; and the significance of dwelling memories in old age.

A series of themes reverberate throughout: the issue of gaining control over space in order to feel a positive sense of self-identity; the issue of manipulating, molding, or decorating that space in order to create a setting of psychological comfort, which interconnects with identity or personal well-being; and the issue of continuity with significant places of the past, so that a sense of control and identity experienced at an earlier age is supported by reproducing the essence of a significant past environment.

We will briefly elaborate on each of these themes. It seems clear that control over some portion of the physical environment is a critical component of positive self-identity. For children, their bed, their "cubby" at day care, or a secret "den" in the woods may be the start of feeling there is a place that is truly theirs. In adolescence, bedroom posters, a wild decor, or deliberate disarray may be used to communicate an emerging sense of self-identity, separate from parents. The family home established for childrearing is, for most people, such a powerful communicator of identity that its loss with the onset of old age or divorce may be as large a threat to self-identity as the loss of a human relationship. Examples of all of these situations will be presented in the form of case studies.

A second theme that emerges constantly in discussing issues of place attachment, closely tied to the first, is that of manipulating or molding a space to reflect who we believe we are. Having title to a space is only the beginning—"This is John's bedroom . . . This is Gwen's desk . . . This is Stephen's locker. . . ." Decorating or personalizing this space in our own particular style is our way of saying: "This is *mine*; not any room/desk/locker, but mine . . . This is an expression of who I am." Impediments to doing this, in the form of parental, institutional, or corporate rules, can be serious inhibitors of self-expression in the physical environment, and thus of a positive sense of self-identity.

A third theme that emerges frequently during in-depth dialogues on people's emotional attachment to home, is the importance of *continuity* with important environments and people of the past. If our sense of identity develops and changes through our lives as a result of relationships with a variety of significant people and places, then it makes sense that we might wish to echo those places in the dwellings we choose, and place mementos of such people within them. These acts of anchoring ourselves to times, people, and places in our personal past are critical to our emotional well-being; they allow us to

weather the swells and storms of change that are components to a greater or lesser extent of every life path. Such continuity with the past becomes especially critical in old age.

## ADULT MEMORIES OF THE SPECIAL PLACES OF CHILDHOOD

Childhood is that time when we begin to be conscious of self, when we begin to see ourselves as unique entities. It is not surprising, then, that many people regard that time as an almost sacred period in their lives. Since it is difficult for the mind to grasp a time period in abstract, we tend to connect with it through memories of the *places* we inhabited. For most of us, a return in later life to a dwelling or landscape where we spent our childhood years can be a highly charged experience, the more so if we find the place has changed—a house demolished, a favorite play place built over. We hold onto childhood memories of certain places as a kind of psychic anchor, reminding us of where we came from, of what we once were, or of how the environment nurtured us when family dynamics were strained. Whatever befalls us in later life, those memories remain; it is as though childhood is a temporal extension of the self.

As infants, we relate primarily to mother or primary caregiver. We are dependent on this other being for food, care, nurturance, protection, and love. As we start to mature into early childhood, we begin to explore the environment around us: we touch and throw and hit and crawl to discover the nature of the “stuff” around us. Gradually, with greater assurance, we begin to explore the world outside the protection of home. First under the watchful eye of an adult, and then alone in a setting that adults have created partially for our safe use (yard, garden, play area), we dig, break sticks, pick up leaves, watch insects, climb trees, and create river systems in the sandbox. We learn what the world is made of; we learn how we can manipulate it to satisfy our questioning minds, our sensing fingertips, our excitement-seeking emotions. We play at “now-you-see-me-now-you-don’t”—at first through peekaboo, then by running ahead in the park and bouncing out from behind a bush, then by playing hide-and-seek with our friends, and finally, by creating a secret place (cubby, clubhouse, den, hideout) that our parents may not ever know about. We act out the inevitable process of separation via games and activities in the environment. For some people, that place of initial separation and autonomy, that secret home-away-from-home, lingers in adult life as a powerful image and nostalgic memory.

For many years, I have asked students of architecture and landscape architecture at Berkeley to draw their most fondly remembered childhood environment and then to write about this and subsequent significant places in an exercise I term “Environmental Autobiography.” After reading hundreds of these essays over the years, it is clear that these earliest childhood places are powerful images, resonating into adulthood via memories, dreams, even the creative work of some adult designers.

Though most of my students grew up in the United States, approximately one-fourth are foreign students from countries as far afield as Nigeria, Germany, Italy, Cyprus, Iran, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Australia, and Indonesia. Despite the wide variety of place and type of upbringing, socioeconomic background, and culture, the themes that appeared in these essays remained essentially the same: for the great majority their fondest memories are of playing outside (rather than within the dwelling), and of creating or finding special hiding places. Asked to recall special environments of childhood, people describe specific *places* and particular emotions or *psychological processes* which these places helped to facilitate. It is appropriate to consider each of these—place and process—in turn, and to attempt to define major categories of each.

Remembered childhood places tend to fall into three categories: purpose-built adult spaces, such as culverts, shacks, porches, or closets, taken over by children for their particular use; hiding places “molded” out of the natural landscape, like nests or lairs; or places specifically constructed for play, such as tree houses or forts. We will consider examples of each of these in turn.

A young architect who grew up in a Texas city described his favorite place—a dark, scary culvert—where his experiences were in marked contrast to those in the neat and bland yard of his suburban home.

The place was Dallas, Texas. I lived across the Trinity River from the downtown business district. The culvert was for drainage in a wide grassy easement. The easement was at least a few thousand yards wide, and I knew it must stretch all the way to New York (at the age of seven my refined sense of distance had not quite bloomed).

The culvert was a favorite “hidden” place for me to go. It was dark in the tunnel—darker the further you dared go in. I knew the Giant Spiders lived there, I just didn’t know how far in. About ten feet in there was a second culvert branching off. It was smaller and had metal reinforcing bars covering the opening. These had been pulled back (by the spiders?) and were twisted and rusted.

Another young man who later became a landscape architect describes his secret home designated by him and his friends as “the palace.”

There was this old shack on the hill behind Huber Park in El Cerrito, California. The shack was about to fall apart. About half the wallboards were missing. . . . Most of the roof was missing. There was nothing to sit on but the rough board floor. This old shack was totally surrounded by lush greenery, much of which extended inside through the missing wall planks. It really seemed to be out in the jungle. In reality it was only about thirty feet or less from an asphalt path which passed through the block and down to the park. A friend (Kenneth) and I would sneak back into this old shack. . . . Once inside I remember it as being lush and cool, a very tranquil setting. I have been referring to this place as a shack. But I was not attracted to it for qualities which one would relate to the word “shack.” My friend and I had a code word for it. We called it “the palace.” This word was part of a larger code which we designed to speak secretly about going to this place to smoke cigarettes. We enjoyed the opportunity to sneak away to this place for secret business.

The culvert in Texas and the shack in El Cerrito are examples of adult-made environments secretly appropriated by children; such spaces—recalled nostalgically—are frequently outside and away from the home dwelling. Some people, however, recall spaces inside the house. These people are more likely to be women, who—as girls—often have less territorial freedom than boys. A young woman recalls her hideaway:

The walk-in closet in the bedroom was my favorite hideaway. It had doors that can be opened from both the inside and the outside and a light within. The closet was large enough for three people to fit in, but I often liked to close the doors and locked myself in to play house or read books.

All these found environments, in effect, served double duty: on the one hand, they were spaces in the adult world with specific functions, and ownership; on the other hand, they were temporarily, often secretly used by children for their own purposes. It is significant that many special places of childhood are given names and form part of a “secret” language and set of activities that coexist with and in the adult world. The designation of special names is an important component of childhood appropriation of space.

A second broad category of fondly remembered childhood places are those that were consciously molded or created out of ubiquitous loose material such as dirt, sand, leaves, grass, or twigs. A young woman who grew up in a New Jersey suburb recalls a piece of unclaimed ground where she and her friend made “houses.”

“The Hill” was a pile of dirt which apparently had been dumped into the woods across the street from my friend Kathy’s house by builders. Kathy, her younger brother, two younger sisters, myself, and other neighborhood children often played there after school and during the summer. I was about ten at the time. The others were all younger. We pretended that the hill and the area around it was our “town.” We all made “houses” by raking up leaves into long piles which represented walls.

A young woman who grew up in southern California remembered nostalgically the banks of a tidal slough not far from her home.

A grassy bank on “our” side of the bay led from the bank of the houses down to the shallow water. The grass was tall enough for me to hide in most of the year and there was a deep ravine down by the water which was a perfect location for our fort and club, usually a very secretive organization of play friends, three of them. I can remember the rich smell of salt and warm sun intensifying the smell of the grass. The smell to most people was offensive, stagnant water, but to us it was paradise because it was “ours.”

The mud was the consistency of clay and was fantastic for molding objects that could be left to dry in the sun, such as secret club objects and things to use in the fort and of course our “food,” ceremonial cakes, elaborately decorated with wild flowers pressed in the mud and shell remnants. Sometimes a whole day would pass and the sun would start to set and we could hardly believe it was gone.

A third category of place was one actually constructed—such as a fort or tree house. This was a form of childhood place more frequently remembered by boys than by girls, and one that was more visible to adult eyes as a place created by and for children. A young man recalls such a place on the edge of a small California town where he grew up.

The wooded hillside provided a natural play area. Soon after moving in, I carried left-over building materials up the hill and built a tree house, which afforded a fine view of the house and back yard, but which could not be seen from below. At first my private domain, my brothers and friends eventually started building their own “forts” (as we called them) out of scrap materials under and around my tree house. We soon had quite an extensive structure up there on the hill in the trees. But we were constantly tearing down, expanding, rebuilding. The fun of having this fort was in constantly changing it, and not just enjoying it as it was. Whenever a new house was built in the neighborhood, my brothers, friends, and I would scout the building site for discarded materials, and haul them up the hill for our structure.

Having considered these broad categories of remembered places, we need to ask the question *why* are they remembered so vividly 10, 20, 30 years later? Simply stated, they were the settings of significant emotional experiences critical to the process of growing up. Stated in more academic terms, these environments were richly connected with psychological processes that are part of human development in the middle years of childhood (approximately 6–12 years). The emotion experienced and the setting inhabited become so deeply intertwined that a recollection of the place triggers memories of feelings, and vice versa.

Space is appropriated at such a time of life to claim a setting where privacy can be regulated; to look for nurturance in the natural world; to experience a sense of pride in the act of creating a place; and to imitate adult behavior—for example, by playing house, defending one’s territory, or testing one’s courage. We will consider examples of, and the reasons for, each of these processes in turn.

Perhaps the most basic and significant function of childhood hiding places is the creation of a place to be *private*—be it a blanket “fort” in the playroom, or a tree house at the bottom of the garden, or an area of flattened grass in the middle of a meadow. A niche of one’s own is often critical in the sometimes confusing world of adults, family tensions, school, and growing up; it is a place to create a fantasy world, to practice being “grown up,” or to read and think undisturbed. A young woman recalls such a place in the family garage.

We used to play in the rafters in the garage, because it was a secretive, cozy place among the brass trunks. We played here on rainy days because it was a warm spot near the roof, especially when the dryer was on. Our cat had several litters of kittens up here, which was a real attraction for us. I remember liking it up there because it was a two story place, and our house was only one story. I felt that I was above everything, hidden, and secretive. This spot was even more attractive to me later in the sixth-seventh grades, when I would retreat and write in my diary or read Nancy Drew books for hours.



A place to be private and let down one's facade does not necessarily have to be secret; a young woman who grew up in a middle-class neighborhood of San Francisco wrote:

I felt happy, comfortable, and at ease in my room. I loved this room because of the large window and the view out to the backyards. . . . In this room I felt cheerful. . . . I rearranged the room so that my bed was by the window and laid in my bed gazing at the stars. I felt philosophical and wondered about the universe. I questioned UFO's and the existence of other forms of life. I felt very much at peace with myself and my surroundings. . . . I felt innocent and child-like, and I would write "Good morning world" backwards on the window through the dew. At these times I contemplated life and why things or people were the way they were.

I felt some control over my life and my environment here; I could go to my room and be alone and when I needed to, I could be philosophical. I could study, I could listen to music, I could have friends over, or I could be sad. I had a place to go to be myself, whether it be happy or sad, where I did not have to put up any facades.

If our dwellings in adulthood are those settings where we are most at liberty to be ourselves, where we don't have to "put up any facades," then clearly this process begins in childhood. It may begin in a hidden place in the outer world, or in our own bedroom at home. This is the period in our development when our ego-self, separate from parents and other caregivers, begins to take shape. We need to claim a space where we can, when we choose, be physically alone—to fantasize, to dream, to play roles, to nurture emerging self-identity.

One significant mode of self-exploration in childhood is the actual *creation* of place—the molding or shaping of the physical environment into a setting that is an expression of one's emerging identity, a setting in which one can take pride. A young woman who grew up close to the Berkeley campus describes her hidden childhood place, shared with friends for games of "housie."

In the Eucalyptus Grove on the U.C. campus, there is a specific clump of tall eucalyptus trees growing very close together and separated from the shrubby riparian vegetation of Strawberry Creek. . . .

Linda, Martha and I used to play "housie" here after school. Whenever the nearby lawn was cut, we'd get some of the fresh, fragrant smelling grass, and line the floors of our separate "bedrooms" and "living-room" with it. At one point, the huge trunks and exposed roots intersected to form a little platform overlooking the creek. That was my room, and I was terribly proud and fond of it.

The need to express oneself in the creation or manipulation of the physical environment is expressed in adult life in a range of activities from building one's own home, to rearranging the furniture, to repainting a rented room, to pinning up posters in one's office. It is a need that begins in childhood, yet one that parents and teachers of children sometimes mistakenly "support" by creating places *for* their children. An architect who had grown up in a Dallas suburb described the professional landscaping of his backyard.

The play yard I shared with my brother and sister was made “beautiful” and “ordered.” A playhouse with operable windows, shutters, window box, and dutch door was built. It was white with a shake shingle roof and (I don’t believe it!) an angled redwood deck. Out from the deck was a marble chip play area. Over the marble chips, hanging from a fine tree, was a rope swing with a metal disk for a seat. Ivy had been planted all around with metal edges. This house was furnished with odds and ends and toys. This had all been put in the shaded corner where the grass had failed due to the lack of adequate sunlight.

I remember this play area with mixed emotions, but primarily one of childhood misunderstanding. It was soon apparent to me that this design was cosmetic in nature and not really resultant from any needs of our childhood play. Somehow I could not fathom why I had not been consulted because I was convinced I could have done a much better job designing the area. After all, when you fall off the swing onto a bed of jagged marble chips, or try to run across them barefooted, it becomes readily apparent what a mistake the designer has made. This “maintenance-free” design had obliterated the area of lawn where we could dig in the dirt without ruining the grass lawn. Consequently I tried other means to manipulate the environment.

While playing fireman one day I had the hose and a hammer (my hatchet) and because the “whole town” was burning down, I clang-clanged over to the rear door of the garage and broke out every pane of glass, stuck in the hose and turned on the water full blast! What I “put out” was my dad, who proceeded to “set fire” to my backside.

A young man who spent countless days building, changing, and modifying a series of forts with his brothers recalls his dismay when his father—thinking he was helping—built them a more permanent structure.

After a few years of using this structure, my father, delighted with the arrangement we had created, decided to construct for us a fort up on the hill. However, this structure was carefully designed and built out of more permanent materials by an adult, and, while we enjoyed it for a short time, the simple fact that it had been built in a manner not meant for alteration quickly led us to abandon it for our old fort, where we could easily and continually manipulate our play environment.

Whether these special places of childhood were called forts, dens, houses, hideaways, or club houses, whether they were found, modified, or constructed, they all seemed to serve similar psychological and social purposes—places in which separation from adults was sought, in which fantasies could be acted out, and in which the very environment itself could be molded and shaped to one’s own needs. This is the beginning of the act of dwelling, or claiming one’s place. Some recall their hiding places as indeed a microcosm of home—a place to prove that a child, too, can create a house and play at adult roles. A young woman describes a special place in the yard of her suburban New Jersey home.

There was a brick well around the base of the tree, topped with a wooden bench that I turned into a play kitchen. There was enough room inside the well for me and the tree, and I would stand inside and “cook” on the wooden counter, and then serve my dishes to my imaginary friends who sat around the counter. Upstairs, the tree house was my living room with a “panoramic view of the city,”

really just my backyard. I liked playing house a lot, but only when I was alone, because that way I could be mother, father, brother, sister, dog, cousin, and everyone else. I played with my brother in the tree house, but never in my "kitchen"—that was my secret game.

A further function for these places of childhood is, then, as a setting in which one can imitate adult roles—where one can play at "families," at being "mother" or "father," or "fireman" or "cowboy." Here children can play act at skills they may need in adult life—gardening, construction, dwelling maintenance, decoration, cooking, laying claim to territory. For many children, their hiding place is the only corner of the environment that they, personally, are able to build, maintain, and modify. Sometimes when a group gets into building houses, the question of "property rights" surfaces. Is this an imitation of adult behavior—or innate territorial yearnings?

I remember that we were quite possessive about our "houses." We each had a territory staked out by piles of leaves and other junk. There were continuous battles about where one person's "house" ended and another's began. I also remember that it was a major offense to steal something from someone else's "house." I suppose the hill itself was a focal point in our environment. Nobody ever claimed the top of it for themselves. Our "houses" crept up the flanks, but the hill was more a communal place or rallying spot. It didn't belong to any one individual.

Sometimes these territorial tensions can lead to mock battles and destruction of property. A young man recalls his childhood play on some wasteland, near the edge of a small California town.

During this time we got really into building forts. I was small so I couldn't do too much but they let me help. We would divide into smaller groups and each group would build their own fort. It would take weeks; we would drag materials from the railroad yard, from our houses, from anywhere we could find them, dig holes into the hill and erect our forts. After they were up they became club-houses for the kids who built them and were the center of activity for awhile. Territorial pressures would build up and would finally erupt into a spontaneous rock fight; actually now that I think of it, they weren't that spontaneous because I remember we would stockpile rocks for a few days and then as the taunts flew we would get into the dirt clod fight. Invariably the victors of the fight would be the ones whose fort held up. The battles took a heavy toll on the structures; most of them would be total wrecks because when we ran out of rocks we would run out of what was left of our forts and go tear each other's fort down. After the fight the site would be abandoned, new alliances would be formed, and a new site somehow selected and the process begun over again.

An important component of growing up is not only the imitation of adult domestic and work behavior, but also testing oneself against real or imagined dangers in the physical world beyond one's home. The young man who grew up in a Texas suburb sought retreat, privacy, and the testing of his courage in a drainage culvert not far from his home.

It was a quiet place where I could retreat from everything. A few of my friends knew about the place or knew that I visited it (it was not exactly hidden from

view), but it was “my” place. Over a short span of years, I grew with this place. I conquered the spiders eventually and traveled great distances through the tunnels. I conquered countless foes there. I was alone there, but secure, knowing that the tunnels connected me with hundreds of others. I was nearly always silent there, but was surrounded by gurgling, trickling water, deep resonant earth sounds, and rustling leaves.

A man who grew up on a fruit farm in New England recalls a special feeling for a forested area beyond his father’s orchards, where he once got lost, but later returned to overcome his fears.

When I was 8 . . . Chip, my friend Matt and I went for a hike up in the woods. After playing Cowboys and Indians for an hour or so, we realized we were lost. First thing we did was to run to every clearing we thought we saw. This proved to be exhausting and fruitless. . . . Matt was showing signs of panic. . . . After a while we popped out onto a rock ledge about 30 feet high and 100 feet long. . . . it suddenly hit us we’d gone in a large circle. . . . We started off again, in a more stressed state and an hour later ended up at the same ledge. At this point, Matt started to cry and Chip looked very worried. I remembered not being worried but feeling like I should be because they were. . . . At this point we figured out that if we lined up select trees, we could form a straight line and continuously do this until we reached something man made. Ten minutes later . . . we wandered out into the orchard feeling like we had just found the source of the Nile. . . . The next day I went back into those woods to find my lost six-shooter. I didn’t find it but I did get lost again and wound up on that ledge, but I was able to find my way out easily using our new found technique. From that point on I’ve always had confidence about finding my way through a forest. That forest became one of my favorite walking places. As if I alone knew how to get through it.

While the quest for privacy, the experience of self-expression, or the testing of courage may be some of the most obvious psychological processes that took place in specially remembered childhood places, for a few, spaces away from home were sought as sources of nurturance and caring when these needs were not fully met within the family. A young woman, whose mother had died in early childhood, describes a secret place at the back of her house, bounded by trees and a small stream.

I remember the mud shining and wet, slicked down after a rain. It smelled special too—extremely musty, damp, and secretive. Together, the mud, the dark, and the running water encircled me.

My feelings about being thus enclosed are ambiguous. Because much of my early life was so traumatic, I deeply appreciated feeling “cared for” by this place. But sometimes, I was afraid of my lack of control over it. For instance, I vividly remember when my good friend Laura (my ex-step-sister) and I were exploring the creek. We picked our way over the bit stones until we reached a big tunnel. Poking my head inside the tunnel, I saw a painted skeleton on the wall. I screamed, and tried to run but couldn’t because of the swift current and all the big rocks.

For this young women, “being encircled” and “being cared for” in this place were clearly nurturing (as well as occasionally terrifying) experiences.

A young man recalls the wooded landscape of an outdoor education center in Ohio, first visited in the fifth grade.

I don't know why I felt nor continue to feel so strongly about this place. . . . It may have been one of the first significant places that I was able to "bond" with. . . . I think it's important for people to have such a place, even if it is thousands of miles away, where they know the place will take them back and nurture them no matter how long they have been absent. That is how I feel about the glen. Whenever I return to Ohio, usually once a year or less, I insist on returning and renewing myself there. . . . I have memories of how it has been loving at different times in my life.

Another woman, looking back on the whole landscape of her rural European childhood, remembered it as a powerful source of nurturance and support.

The sounds and smells, above all, the vegetation of a country childhood, seem like the soft pillow and quilts of our infant crib, writ large upon the landscape. Here were the trees that nurtured us, the shrubs that gave us fruits and berries, the flowers we called brothers and sisters. These were our family beyond the family, timeless scenery, imprinted in that time of acute vulnerability and openness to the world. The human family is mobile and mortal; the botanical family of childhood returns each season, indifferent to our coming and going. But we are not indifferent to it—our green womb of homecoming.

The near universality of these fondly remembered childhood places and the tone and emotion of these recollections—15 or 30 years later—suggest that they represent an experience that goes far beyond the actual act of making or finding a secret place and far deeper than the actual amount of time spent there would suggest. Places that are molded or constructed are often our first attempts to create something material outside ourselves. They are, perhaps, a physical expression of the emerging ego-self, separate from parents and family. They are our first tentative experiments in the experience of dwelling, in appropriating and personalizing a special place, and—unconsciously—in reflecting on what we have made. In later life, as we create a home as an expression of personal and social values, that reflection is more conscious.

For those who recall a special landscape or place in nature, they are perhaps reconnecting with a deep spiritual experience of connectedness with all life—an experience which many children have but suppress because of its power or mystery, or because later linear thinking relegates it to childish daydreaming. Thinking back to that precious time of childhood when we first became aware of both our self-identity and the holistic nature of life, many become conscious (perhaps for the first time) of an almost-numinous quality of that time and place. Indeed, one Jungian scholar proposes that those who, in adult life, go further in the process of individuation—becoming their own unique selves—have almost always had meaningful experiences of the unconscious in childhood.

Often secret places or private activities are involved which the child feels are uniquely his and which strengthen his sense of worth in the face of an apparently hostile environment. Such experiences, although not consciously understood . . . leave a sense that one's personal identity has a transpersonal source of support. (Edinger, 1973, p. 295)

Thus far, we have been considering childhood environments remembered in the early years of adult life, and nostalgic attachments both to the actual place and to the psychosocial growth that occurred within it. In the next section, we will consider how older adults recall and sometimes reproduce in their current home some essence of a fondly remembered place of childhood.

### REPRODUCING SPECIAL PLACES OF CHILDHOOD IN THE ADULT HOME

For many years, I have been investigating the emotional meaning of people's dwellings. I have used a method of interviewing based on role-playing, and where appropriate, have asked people to speak to their house as if it were animate, and then to become their house speaking back to themselves. A frequently recurring theme in these interviews is the recognition of the continuing influence of a significant childhood setting on current choices of dwelling location, dwelling form, garden design, interior decoration, and the like. The cases that follow—of Connie, Priscilla, Joe, Michael, and Lou—are drawn from over 60 interviews conducted with people in the San Francisco Bay Area between 1977 and 1990.

If our childhood is a time period that we embrace as an extension of self, then it is not surprising that many of us try to incorporate some of the environmental memories of that period into our adult homes. The choice of a dwelling that repeats some essence of a childhood home may simply represent a wish for security: "If my childhood was spent in a house like this, maybe in my adulthood I will experience some of the same nurturance by settling in a similar place." On the other hand, that original dwelling of memory was selected or created by another person and was his or her expression of self: "Grandfather chose *that* kind of place as an expression of who he was. I admire grandfather. *I* will choose a similar place so that I can be like him." Recreating and nurturing a relationship with a beloved family member, now gone, is often enacted via the physical environment: displaying their photograph, tending objects they once owned or trees they once planted, living in a house like the one they built or chose to live in.

#### CONNIE: AN "ENGLISH" GARDEN IN A FARAWAY LAND

Connie came to the United States as an immigrant 20 years ago, in her late twenties. After marriage and acquiring a home, she began to create a flower garden at the front of her house. She had grown up in England during the Second World War, was evacuated from London during the Blitz, and in a country setting, was taught to love gardening by an aunt. She became an avid gardener, and by 10 years old, was raising vegetables for the family and growing flowers on a tiny patch of ground in front of their house. As an adult, living in a different culture and climate, she has created an "English" garden in front

of her house, a very different kind of garden from most of those in her neighborhood. At the back, a large vegetable bed is her private preserve—she likes to work there alone and experiences a profound sense of connectedness and centering while engaging in such mundane tasks as digging and weeding. The garden and her work in it create a (largely) unconscious connection to the time and place of her childhood, when raising food for her family gave her childhood a dimension of usefulness. That almost numinous connection with earth and nature, first experienced in childhood, was being sought again as the age-old tasks of sowing, tending, harvesting were repeated in their appropriate seasons. For Connie, the garden of her adult home has permitted her to reproduce the place and activity that gave her the most profound experience of centeredness and nurturance during the impressionable and sometimes fearful wartime years of her childhood.

This phenomenon—of creating a garden that repeats some aspects of an earlier, fondly remembered place—may be more common than we think. In a study of more than a hundred gardens in new suburban tracts east of San Francisco Bay, Helena Worthen (1975) found that many people

. . . did not understand where they were. . . . People planted gardens which made them feel at home. . . . They weren't interested in discovering which plants were ecologically best suited to their gardens. A man from Oregon wanted roses, gladioli, and a blue spruce, because that was what he had grown up with. A teenaged girl, who loved "Hawaii Five-O" created a tropical jungle out front. A woman of Italian extraction planted the same vegetables her mother had grown. . . . A pleasantly daffy elderly man was cultivating a *Grevillea robusta* which he claimed was a silver birch. . . . "Oh, I'm sure it's a birch," he said. "I'm from Illinois and all we had were roses and silver birches." (pp. 17–18)

Clearly, for this man, the tree had to be a silver birch because such a tree enabled him to feel linked to the places of his formative years.

#### PRISCILLA: THE DWELLING AS A CONTAINER OF MEMORIES

For Priscilla, living alone in a rustic, one-bedroom, rented cottage in the Berkeley Hills, both her home and the surrounding neighborhood contain echoes of a New England childhood, 40 years before. When asked to describe her feelings for her current home, she says:

I feel a lot of comfort around me. Harmonious colors. Good feelings under my feet, rugs, pillows, all full of life, warmth. Things that I've grown up with as a child, I've brought back with me; I've put them into my nest. Like this lamp, which I grew up with as a child, and pictures I had a great feeling for. The old chair in the kitchen which I brought back from my mother's house two years ago; she was going to give it to the Salvation Army but was afraid they wouldn't take it. I really have a good feeling of continuity about the things which I have. I love having things which have been in the family, which have been used before, and which I can see again in a different light in a different environment, and feel as if they've been around for a long time. They have some spirit to them: rocking chair spirit, old Singer sewing machine spirit, used by a lot of people. They have a voice, they have life of their own.

I asked Priscilla to go back, in her imagination, to that home of her childhood: it was just outside Boston in a place which was then semirural, but is now a suburb.

Just thinking about the house is putting some sort of vibration in my body. I can feel myself sort of vibrating inside. It's *the* family house I guess that's setting up the vibrations. I lived in this house from the time I was born until I left, for college. So it had very strong roots for me. And in that house too the furniture and the furnishing were old pieces. They were pieces which had been from my father's mother. There was a sense of rootedness about the furniture, dark furniture, beautiful fabrics, old beautiful rugs. A feeling of heaviness, too. As a child I suppose that I felt tremendous security from all of these things which had been around for a while. My feeling about that house is that it was a wonderful place to be *from*! I feel very separate from it now, although I've taken some of the things from that house and put them into my own environment, which is a lighter environment. When I think back upon the house then it feels a little heavy to me. The colors may have been heavy colors. I love the fact of bringing some of those things into my life now, by having contrasting environments, contrasting fabrics, and having a contrast of old and new—that's what really interests me is having a contrast of old and new.

For Priscilla, then, an important theme in her home is one of *continuity*—of having things in her house that have been used before, that she grew up with as a child and “which I can see in a different light.” When recalling with some emotion the house she grew up in, she remembers that there were pieces there too that had come from her grandmother's house. She remarked: “As a child I suppose that I felt a tremendous security from all these things which had been around for a while.” The objects with which she decorates her current home environment are ever-present, material reminders of the positive, nurturing environment she experienced as a child, particularly from her mother.

Significantly, when Priscilla decided—shortly after her fiftieth birthday—to leave this much-loved cottage and buy a small house of her own, her choice was to move to Ashland, Oregon, because—among other things—the small town, the vegetation, the whole community reminded her of her New England upbringing. The need to return to our environmental roots seems especially pressing for many people in the second half of life, as old age appears on the horizon.

In past eras, the middle and upper classes in this culture often achieved a sense of continuity by staying in the same house for several generations. The house became symbolic of stability and continuity. Today, in a mobile society, very few stay all their lives in one dwelling; even fewer inherit and dwell in the house of their parents. Houses are not built to last several generations. Increasingly, continuity and memories are rooted in *things*—movable, storable, shippable—rather than in the fabric of the house itself.

Just as we need to be oriented in space, to know where we are, where we “belong,” so too we have a need to be oriented in time. In childhood, we are remarkably present and future oriented; the past has little meaning, and evokes little affect compared with “what we'll do next summer,” “what I'll be when I grow up.” A component of maturity or of emerging self-hood as an



individual, culture, or nation is an increasing concern for the past and how that is incorporated in current identity. Thus, the women's movement or the evolution of black pride was accompanied by a reconsideration of history from a female or ethnic perspective. Similarly, a component of an individual's move from adolescence to adulthood is an increasing interest in the past (individual, family, cultural) and how he or she fits into this complex temporal schema.

In a study entitled *The Meaning of Things*, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) asked 315 people (half upper middle class, half lower middle class) in a large U.S. city to name the most cherished objects in the home. The results indicate that the cherishing of objects full of memories increases substantially from youth to adulthood and old age. While adolescents are most likely to cherish stereos or sports equipment (egocentric, present experience), their grandparents are most likely to cherish family photos or significant items of furniture (past association and reminders of family networks). Thus, allowing an older person to bring their own furniture into an otherwise impersonal housing scheme or retirement home is critically important for establishing a sense of personal continuity. Depriving them of such objects may be cutting off a part of the self.

#### JOE: ECHOES OF A MISSOURI CHILDHOOD

Joe—a middle-aged university professor of forestry—lives with his wife and two teenage children in a modest stucco house in an older suburb of a university city. The house stands on a small 35-foot-wide lot with a short setback and no street trees; the whole block of similar houses is quite visible and exposed.

At the time of our dialogue, Joe's house was in the process of a major conversion. The house is being extended at the back to encompass an enlarged kitchen and an additional bedroom. Planning regulations allow only 50% coverage of the lot; with this addition the house will cover 49.8%. He had applied for an exception to cover more, but had been turned down. If Joe had had his way, the house would have covered virtually the whole lot. Reflecting on his profession in forestry, I naively expected that he might be interested in having a garden, or at least some trees around his house. That he is interested in neither seems to be a reflection of his own childhood environment and what he has absorbed from that time of a "suitable" image of home.

I have never enjoyed what I call yard work, and I have one of the worst yards in the neighborhood in terms of care. I don't look forward to those days when I mow the lawn. I don't anticipate the roses blooming, or flowers, or anything like that. I think this probably came out of my childhood. My family was never involved in these activities and I didn't learn to gain any pleasure from them.

I grew up with my parents and older brother in an apartment in Missouri. It was much more spacious and private than this house, but it had virtually no outdoor space. We had a small patch of grass in front of this apartment building. It was my job to mow it. It was a space that couldn't be used for anything, so I developed a negative feeling about the urban lawn. As a child, I didn't see I was

getting any benefit out of keeping it trim. I have always felt a strong separation of urban and rural space. I think I would have been very content to live in a medieval city with a wall that said—"This is the city; and this is the non-city." I feel very content in cities like Chicago or New York; they are not trying to be anything else but cities. On the other hand, I get a lot of pleasure from being out in the country or the wilderness. I have never felt a strong incentive to mix the two, even in terms of my own living space. It doesn't bother me that there aren't any trees along this street. My appreciation of the outdoors evolved from a childhood when my family did a lot of camping. We never used a garden, or even urban parks. When we were outdoors it was completely away from our home, on camping trips in the mountains or wilderness. I was either in the apartment or off on a trip. I didn't grow up with any intermediate outdoor space. I sort of see this home as part of the same pattern; if I want to do something outside I would never think of doing it outside in my backyard. So I don't really feel I'm losing anything by building over half the lot!

Influenced by a dream of his mother's to have a doctor-son, Joe began his university studies as a premed student. But two summers working for the Forest Service in Montana convinced him that a career in forestry was more to his liking. Curiously, it was again a powerful memory from childhood that influenced the direction his career took within that field.

My mother came from a large family of five children. They lived in a big house with a very large yard. They had a big vegetable garden, and she talked about it a lot when I was a child. I saw it quite often because my grandparents lived there until I was 7; it was in the same town where we lived in the apartment. My fond memories of that house, as much as anything else, turned me away from a regular career in the Forest Service.

I married in my sophomore year. After graduation, I went to work for the Forest Service in a remote part of Alaska. We had this little house out there in the wilderness, surrounded by forest. It wasn't the form of the house or its location that bothered me, but the fact that I could never *own* it. The Forest Service move their personnel quite often; it's seldom you stay in one place more than three years; then you're transferred. I realized if I stayed in the service, we would always live in government housing. It's not that they aren't *nice* houses. Many district rangers in Montana live in much larger houses than this one, and much newer. So it's not to do with the *quality* of the house, but that you can't own it. All the rangers I knew in Montana felt a certain reluctance to do anything to those houses because they didn't own them.

So I finally woke up one day and said, "Well, what are my options if I want to stay in forestry and I don't want to be moved around, and I want to make changes to my home." And it occurred to me that teaching, being a college professor, could be a very good lifestyle. . . . I could stay in forestry; go out in the field to do my research, but not be forced to move around.

And so, in a curious convoluted way, Joe's current living environment is a fascinating admixture of influences from both his parents and his grandparents homes. From his parents, he inherited a preference for urban living, for an apartment-like dwelling with little intermediate outdoor space. In those respects his current home, covering much of the lot in an urban/suburban setting, is an echo of his Missouri childhood. From his grandparents house (and his mother's recollection of *her* childhood in that home), he inherited a desire to

own a dwelling that he could change and improve and from which he would not have to move. In his modest but expanding stucco house, he has achieved an amalgam of both these sets of values, an echo of two significant places of childhood.

The story of Joe is an example of the powerful resonance of place values learned in childhood, transposed into a different time and setting for the purpose—perhaps barely conscious—of creating a sense of continuity, familiarity, and security in a dwelling place created as an adult.

#### MICHAEL AND LOU: PRESERVING MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD PLACES

Two other men I interviewed seemed similarly to be reliving some aspect of their childhood environment in their current home. Michael grew up in a small Oklahoma town where his wealthy grandfather had donated a park and a water tower to the community, and had built on a prominent hill the largest and most ostentatious house in town. Michael grew up in this house absorbing a message from the house and its setting that he and his family were in some way “different.” This feeling of being set apart or different has been reenacted in the homes of his adult life. He has always lived in dwellings that he and his artist friends perceived as “special and unique”: a barn on a peninsula in Nova Scotia, for example; a loft in Greenwich Village; a villa in Spain; a converted factory in San Francisco. All but the Spanish villa were located high up, with commanding views out over the community.

For Lou, the most powerful influence in his life was also his grandfather. He had nostalgic memories of family reunions, birthdays, and religious festivals at this grandfather’s elegant mansion in an East Coast city. Having arrived penniless from Europe, the grandfather had created a successful business, and eventually bought a house in one of the wealthiest neighborhoods of the city. His grandson was deeply impressed in childhood by this rags-to-riches epic, and he eventually inherited much of his grandfather’s wealth. Perhaps not surprisingly, on moving to the West Coast, he sought out a home that incorporated the essence of his grandfather’s home and which housed much of his inherited furniture.

Over a period of many years, he had brought two wives into this house, but each had reacted negatively to the dwelling and its contents. The influence of Lou’s childhood dwelling on his current values is so powerful that his adult home has become a salient ego defense; despite its “interference” in two significant relationships, he is unable to let go of it. The bond that he feels to his house is a replay in current time of the intense bond he felt with his grandfather (and his house) in the impressionable years of childhood.

#### THE CURRENT HOME AS A CONTRAST TO THAT OF CHILDHOOD, OR AS A REPLAY OF UNRESOLVED CHILDHOOD PROBLEMS

Not all memories of childhood are benign. For some, whose recollections are of difficult family relations or an unpleasant physical environment, the

adult dwelling—or some aspect of its arrangement and use—may represent a conscious *contrast* to that experienced in childhood. This phenomenon also emerged quite frequently in the interviews I conducted on emotional links to the dwelling. In the next section we will look at the stories of Anita, Katey, and Nancy, who have created home settings in contrast to those of childhood; and at Robert, who is deeply immersed in an unconscious struggle with negative childhood memories of home.

#### ANITA: CREATING A BEAUTIFUL HOUSE

For Anita, growing up in a housing project in Buffalo, New York, memories are of a functional, utilitarian, and cold environment.

I grew up in a couple of houses. The first was in Buffalo, New York. I lived there until I was 13. My memory of it is, it was terribly utilitarian, terribly functional, and kind of cold. My memories of my family aren't cold, just the house itself. It was a government housing project for low income families. It was like living in a box. Real solid, but it was boxy and we had very little money so that the furnishings were very plain. I think they were hand-me-downs; I think they were from my mother's brother. I don't remember any kind of personal touches or the feeling that it was beautiful. No beauty in it. No beauty at all. Even my own room, which I longed to have beautiful. I had asthma when I grew up, and my mother had a thing about no dust. So there was nothing in it that was beautiful. There were no little things that would gather dust. There were no curtains. There were no rugs. There were no spreads. It was just plain.

Then we moved to Denver. And it was only slightly better there; but still it wasn't aesthetically beautiful. There weren't any pictures that I remember; there weren't beautiful carpets. I've got stuff all over my house that I just take such pleasure in looking at and being with and being around now. There were no plants, nothing in the houses I grew up in.

As soon as I had my own home I became interested in making my environment more beautiful. I got married when I was 21. And it started with the first small apartments that we had. My decorating them according to the way I wanted them, you know? And then the first home we bought was absolutely exquisite. Just a little tiny box of a house, in Berkeley, and I decorated it and started moving into these blue colors. Those were the colors I was attracted to. The decor has changed over the years for sure, but the kind of basics that make me feel good haven't. I like having things around me that make me feel good.

For Anita now, in her mid-forties, making her house beautiful is a major focus of her life. She earns a good living as a psychotherapist, and a considerable proportion of her earnings are spent not on entertaining, eating out, extravagant clothes, or travel but on making her interior environment "exquisite." Every piece of furniture, many of them Oriental antiques, has clearly been selected with loving care; the whole ensemble is a work of art. And this has clearly been done to nurture her own aesthetic needs for a beautiful environment, and not for "status": she rarely entertains and by her own admission is something of a social recluse. She recognizes that this focus of both financial and psychic energy on the beauty and serenity of her private home is in part a reaction to the lack of beauty she experienced as a child.

## KATEY: FINDING HER OWN TASTE

For some people, the issue they seem to be working out in their current home is not so much a reaction to the blandness or ugliness of a childhood home, but the *control* they felt their parents extended over their personal environment. Katey's mother was an interior decorator, and though Katey kept reiterating how she admired her taste and design abilities, she clearly also felt a powerful need to assert her own taste in her present dwelling. In the house of her childhood her mother controlled everything about the environment: she designed and oversaw the rehabilitation of the house, the landscaping of the garden; she chose and arranged the furniture, selected and bought her children's and her husband's clothes. Katey was not allowed to like anything her mother didn't like.

It's such an old score. I never was allowed to like anything that my mother didn't like. I can remember when I went through my phase of mint green, and she hated it. . . . I felt guilty for liking it. And when we did my room over, it was always pretty much the colors *she* wanted. I hate gold, and by God, if my room isn't done in gold grasscloth! That just isn't me. And when she comes here, I know that she loves this place, and she talks about how terrific I am and how well I do everything. But she can make some comment about the color of a chair, and make me feel real shitty for having put it there—when I know I like it! I really respect her taste. But it's hard for me to have my own taste around her because she's such a strong person. It's hard for me to have anything around her because I have the strongest mother in the whole world.

## NANCY: NEVER FEELING AT HOME

Nancy, now a university professor, recalls a similar overpowering presence of mother in her childhood environment.

The house where I grew up in Houston, I felt like all of it was my mother's, including my room, because she had totally decorated it, wouldn't let me do anything in it. And yet it was a place where I could go and close the door; it was the one place where I could be by myself. And I would do that a lot when I was a kid. . . . It was supposed to be an elegant guest room if someone came through. Although (chuckles) nobody every came through! It was decorated with these heavy French fabrics that were much too hot for the Texas climate. There was a bedroom set, so all the furniture matched, and I always thought it was very ugly. And it had this wall-paper that was just terrible: roses all over everywhere, twining roses on the walls and on the ceilings, and it was as if you'd lie down and go to bed and you'd see these flowers all over. It was as if they were just enclosing you, and I hated it. I used to have these nightmares about Briar Rose being stuck among all the roses and couldn't get out. It was claustrophobic and enclosing; I felt like it had somehow enclosed me in a way that I couldn't break away from it and didn't for a long time. It was tasteful, and trying to look like it was elegant, but it felt like anything I would do would be klutzy, and anything I would try to suggest as being a decoration would be not quite right. It was annoying, as if I couldn't ever really feel at home in any part of it, even the part that was mine.

My mother and I have different tastes. If she saw *this* place she would give me something to try and make it be better. The things she has given me, I'll usually keep them for a while out of some kind of guilt, and then with great relief give them away. There was a print that she once gave me, and I had it up on the wall. I remember one day, I just went and took it down, and put it in the closet, face down. I just felt it was watching me all the time, as if that old feeling of her saying "you can't even decorate your own room," as if that was there. I wasn't going to have it because I knew the place was just fine.

Thus, for some people, memories of childhood environments may arouse profound conflicts, revolving around the struggle to be their own person, separate from the personalities and aesthetic tastes of their parents. In extreme cases, an unresolved conflict with father or mother may be unconsciously projected onto a problematic dwelling of adulthood.

#### ROBERT: ALWAYS LEAVING HOME

Robert, an interior designer, was at the time of the interview troubled over his discontent with a house he and his wife had been living in for a year. Despite his profession, he had found it seemingly impossible to create a comfortable home. Indeed, the layout of the house made this very difficult: the largest central room which was both entry hall and living room had no less than seven door openings off it. He and his wife were forever leaving the house—to go on trips, to go biking or hiking, to go out to eat or for entertainment. Robert wanted to spend more time at home, but the reason he did not do so was a mystery to him.

In the course of the interview, Robert recalled his childhood home, where the difficulty of sharing a room with an older brother, and of finding a place to retreat from the continued presence of his mother, caused him to constantly leave the house. He found solace in the nearby forest, which he explored with his dog, and where he built a series of secret forts. As he recalled this time of his life and the feelings it evoked, Robert had one of those "A-ha!" experiences, where the connections between things become suddenly apparent. He was, as an adult, still working out an unresolved relationship with his mother and was enacting this through the continuation of a childhood pattern of leaving the house.

Many people unconsciously seek out relationships that enable them to continue (and, possibly, complete) the unresolved interpersonal emotions of childhood. Although largely unconscious, these replays of relationships with mother, father, or other significant family members are the stuff of most people's maturing and learning about themselves. Perhaps some of us also unconsciously place ourselves in conflictual environments that, enable us to work out unresolved emotional connections with significant places of childhood. All the more so when the childhood home represented the powerful self-image of a dominant family member. Until this is resolved in some way, a person in such circumstances will always be "leaving home."

Whether these recollections of childhood homes are happy or pained, they

frequently interconnect with memories of mother. This is not surprising; in this culture—as in many—mother is strongly associated with home. She, through nurturance and homemaking, is the parent with whom we most frequently associate childhood. If some aspect of our relationship with mother remains unresolved in adulthood, it is sometimes recalled or reenacted through our relationship with home. (It seems probable that if my research was concerned with satisfaction or feelings about work, many more recollections—both benign and pained—would be associated with father, or a significant male breadwinner in the family.)

### AGING AND THE MEMORIES OF DWELLINGS

For many people, the longer they live their lives in one place, the more they become attached to it—particularly if the time spent in that place included fulfilling human relationships. The place and the people who lived with and around us become intertwined in our memories. For the elderly, the decision to make a move from the family home due to failing health is often a highly emotional experience.

In a study to understand the complexities of this, often final, move, a researcher in Sweden interviewed 14 couples and single adults just before a move into housing for the elderly, just after the move, and approximately a year later (Toyama, 1988). Their reaction to the move varied from quite positive to quite negative. Of course, personality and the ability to cope with change were pertinent factors, but also were a number of variables that are very relevant to our discussion of attachment to place.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the Swedish study indicated that if a person moved only a short geographic distance, he or she was more able to cope with the change. For example, when one elderly man moved only 150 meters from his old home to a new elderly housing project that he had seen being constructed while on his daily walk, the move was quite positive. Mr. and Mrs. Erickson also felt positively about their move, partially because it was to a neighborhood they had lived in 14 years previously and where they did not feel like strangers. And for 73-year-old Mr. Bengtsson, the move was largely positive because the elderly housing scheme was located near his childhood neighborhood.

He adapted to the new environment quite smoothly and was feeling at home in the new place within a very short time. He enjoyed his early morning walk immensely—the streets, fields, and lakeshore where he used to play brought back pleasant memories, and he even met a few old friends after an interval of over 60 years. (Toyama, 1988, p. 50)

If people were able to re-create the interior of their old home in the new apartment, and to find a parallel in the layout of rooms—and therefore in their daily routine—they were also more likely to adjust positively to the move. For example, Mr. Knutsson had a great love of nature and animals, and was happy

when his new apartment very much resembled his old home with floral patterns on sofa and bedspread, large tropical houseplants, views of landscapes, and photos of endangered animals. Similarly, Miss Lihnas, at 88, made a very positive adjustment to her new flat because of her almost daily phone conversations with a network of friends from Estonia (her native country), and because she was able to recreate the special atmosphere of her previous home of 20 years with a large collection of Estonian textiles, carpets, and handicrafts.

Conversely, Mrs. Davidsson became disoriented in her new apartment because rooms were not in the same relationship to each other, and an oblique view of the walls of a factory was much resented and compared with a much-loved view to the forest from the house where she had lived for 23 years. And the adjustment for Mr. Fedrikson and Mr. Carlsson was similarly difficult because each had made so many improvements and changes in the flats that had been home for 28 years and 40 years, respectively. For these two men, space had been appropriated even more profoundly than for those who might inhabit space in a more passive mode. Mr. Carlsson, whose flat of 40 years was an intrinsic component of his sense of identity, started to smoke heavily after the move, and his health deteriorated. His second wife, although living in the same flat for 20 years, had never felt it was "home." She, conversely, adjusted quite quickly to their new apartment; her health and looks improved after the move.

Those elderly people in the Swedish study who had a more active role in both the decision to move and the actual moving process were much more likely to adjust well. In the case of one couple, where deterioration of the husband's health motivated his wife to make arrangements for the move, and where the move was carried out by relatives to avoid further stress for the husband, the whole event backfired. The man was disoriented and very unhappy in the new apartment; he didn't understand why they had moved. He died within a month. Racked with grief and a sense of guilt, his widow avoided staying in the apartment or thinking of it as "home." She visited her adult children, traveled, refused invitations from the new owner to visit her old home of 36 years, and—significantly—spent much time at the summer home she and her husband had enjoyed for many years. Here—in a setting they had created together—she gradually adjusted to her loss. The memories it evoked, although filled with nostalgia, were also healing.

For many people, it may be hard to disentangle the positive memories of "home" as dwelling place and "home" as neighborhood. Mr. Davidsson, in good health at 77, had relied on his wife to create the cozy apartment-home they had shared for 23 years. He went along with the decision to move to a housing scheme for the elderly without any strong feelings either way. After the move, however, he was very unhappy. He sorely missed a daily walk he took in the forest behind their apartment, and the roe deer he fed there; he also missed daily casual meetings with neighbors, some of whom were good friends with whom he went fishing. After the move, he became more passive, was more socially isolated, smoked more heavily, and suffered two heart attacks during the first 6 months in their new apartment.



For Mrs. Henriksson, a widow of 85, the adjustment was equally difficult. A year after the move, she was beginning to feel at home in her flat, but not in the neighborhood; she returned to do her shopping—two subway stops away—in her old neighborhood. Although good relations and frequent contact with her grown children have helped, she misses her husband, who died 2 years prior this move. In her old home of 40 years, she kept his room intact; when she felt tired or sad, she would go in there, sit in his chair, and “talk to him.” These conversations cheered her up.

Yet he didn’t follow her to the new flat. It was very hard for her just after the move. She went to her summer house every Friday and stayed there for the weekend, although it was still winter. . . . She wanted to draw back into her own world and be steeped in it . . . at her summer house she could feel her husband’s presence. He still existed there . . . but not at the new flat. (Toyama, 1988, p. 108)

In conducting these interviews with elderly people, Toyama took photographs of the original home and produced them at the time of a second interview, 6 months or so after a move into elderly housing. He noted:

Without exception, the photos called forth deep feelings, and the subjects made many comments. Some of the subjects rearranged the decorations in their new living rooms to match the photos. (Toyama, 1988, p. 178)

On moving to a new apartment, some of the subjects had to dispose of furniture because they had less space. This was often a very difficult decision; most objects or pieces of furniture had vivid associations with people or times in the past. When furniture was passed on to a relative or close friend who understood the emotional connections it had, the separation was easier. But when objects had to be disposed of commercially, the wrench was much greater. This was the case with Mrs. Jakobsson.

She had sold some furniture to a second-hand dealer, and missed her rocking chair. . . . When the interviewer showed her photographs taken in her old apartment, she smiled (the only time she smiled during the interview) and was very glad to find her old rocking chair in one of the photos. The interviewer invited her to choose one of the photos as a memento, but she took all of them. (Toyama, 1988, p. 124)

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

Memories serve to anchor us in time and space; they are one means by which we make sense of the continual becoming that is the essence of life. Reflecting on who and where we once were helps us become clearer about who we may want to be. Significantly, with the loss of memory (for example, through amnesia or dementia), people do not know who they are. Self-identity is inextricably tied to the people and settings of our past, particularly those places where we made our “mark,” where an expression of our unique identity was made manifest in the material world. Since identity is for most people a

relatively abstract and ungraspable concept, some expression of it “out there” is essential to allow us—and others—to reflect on who we are. It is significant that in institutional settings, where the identity of the *group* is more important than that of the individual (for example, the military, some corporations), or where service and devotion to a higher good is deemed more important than exploration of self (for example, in some religious orders), there are strict rules against personal expression in the environment and/or in one’s dress.

The significant themes that emerged in the cases discussed above include *control* over meaningful space (a hiding place in childhood, a bedroom in adolescence, a dwelling in adulthood); the *manipulation* of that space by means of actual construction, subtle changes, decoration, furnishings, modification, and so on; and the *re-creation* of some essence of significant past settings in later life. These acts—of control, manipulation, and re-creation—have important psychological consequences; we are motivated to effect these changes in order to discover, confirm, and remember who we truly are. Thus, our memories of such settings of self-expression are profoundly important reminders of self-identity, especially so at times in our lives when that very identity is weakened or threatened. Without such memories our very identity as a unique human being may be lost.

Many themes and issues are raised in the discussion of environmental memories that are worthy of further research. First, under the rubric of adult memories of childhood places, we could ask: are memories of particularly salient settings that are *outdoors* true of the population at large, or particular to those who later choose to enter one of the environmental professions? Are memories of *creating places* in childhood universally true, or are they more salient among those who choose to design places in their adult life? And, given that many people who experienced nature as children remember powerful feelings of nurturance and the interconnectedness of all life, what is the equivalent for an urban child? What other psychological processes, beyond those described above, are evoked in childhood appropriation of space?

Second, under the rubric of adult memories of childhood homes, further work is needed on why certain people choose to reproduce some essence of this home in their adult dwelling, while others choose to create a contrasting environment. The issue of gender is also intriguing. My own work on emotional connections to the dwelling raises a suggestive point: men, it seems, are more likely to replay childhood patterns in terms of the layout and form of the house (dwelling as shelter), while women are more likely to do this in relation to furniture or movable objects (dwelling as home). Several empirical studies on gender differences and the home indicate a similar pattern. When children in a New York City study were asked to draw their existing home, boys were much more likely to depict a layout plan, showing the connection of rooms quite accurately. Girls, on the other hand, were more likely to do a sketchy, sometimes inaccurate layout, but to “furnish” it with a very accurate depiction of furniture, colors, ornaments, special objects, and so on (Saegert & Maltz, 1982). In the book *The Meaning of Things*, the authors asked people to describe their home. Men talk about the work they have put into it, either directly

(plumbing, painting, renovating), or indirectly (money to buy or improve a house). The house represents *accomplishment*; the acquisition of home and the provision of shelter for the family conform to our social stereotypes of what males should do. Women—not surprisingly—primarily view home as a place of family relationships; if it supports those, they have positive feelings. Though women—like men—take pride in the work they have done on their houses, it is more likely to be decorative than structural, more to do with creating *home* than providing shelter (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981, p. 133).

Finally, under the rubric of aging and memories of dwelling, numbers of other studies have raised comparable issues, such as the need for continuity and familiarity in the dwelling place inhabited in old age (Boschetti, 1985; Rowles, 1978). With older persons making up one of the fastest-growing household types, it behooves us to delve further into this significant issue of place attachment. Which are the most salient environmental components of continuity—neighborhood, house location, house type, furniture, or activities (such as gardening or hobbies or daily walk)—that contribute to positive mental health? Does the supply of services to the elderly in their own homes make better sense than constructing “senior housing,” not only from an economic perspective, but more importantly, from the perspective of supporting the physical and emotional health of older people?

## CONCLUSION

The subtle but powerful blending of place, object, and feeling is so complex, so personal, that it is unlikely that the process will ever be fully explained. As Riley (1979) wisely suggested in a paper entitled “Reflections on the Landscape of Memory,” the remembering of a place may have less to do with the place *per se*, and more to do with yearning for the emotion or mood it once evoked.

When we recall the comfort and security of childhood’s twilight backyard, is it because of a desire for direct pleasurable environmental stimulus, or because we seek the emotion once associated with place? Adult recall might show not a simple desire for the pleasure of place but a need for the nurture of support experienced there. (Riley, 1979, p. 13)

My sense is that both are equally significant: an elderly person who is moved from a much-loved home of 20 years may yearn both for its familiar rooms, views, and furniture, and for the feeling of comfort and security it evokes. A college student, hearing of the loss of the family home, may mourn both the physical place *per se*, and the emotions embedded within it. Feelings occur in space and inevitably become associated with various highly charged places; feelings cannot occur “out of space” any more than they can occur “out of time.” Thus, any discussion of emotion and place must return to the observation that the two are inexplicably connected, not in a causal relationship, but in a transactional exchange, unique to each person.

In the sense that memory of place is a universal human experience, we are all alike; in the sense that a person's memories are unique, accessible, and meaningful only to that person, specific memories embedded in place cannot be fully experienced by anyone else.

To them Howard's End was a house: they could not know that to her it had been a spirit, for which she sought a spiritual heir. . . . Is it credible that the possessions of the spirit can be bequeathed at all? Has the soul offspring? A whych-elm tree, a vine, a wisp of hay with dew on it—can passion for such things be transmitted . . . ? (E. M. Forester, *Howard's End*, pp. 98–99).

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# Home as a Workplace in the Lives of Women

SHERRY BOLAND AHRENTZEN

An advertisement in the *New York Times Magazine* proclaims her as the “New Traditionalist.” She—the mother, presumably—stands with her arms around her two young children. They are surrounded by the emblems of a clean, cozy, safe, expensive home. The caption reads:

Her children think she’s a little old-fashioned. They’re right. She’s Monica Simon, New Traditionalist—and here she is right at the center of her world. She loves to cook. She loves family dinners. She loves Christmas so much that she spends a whole week trimming the tree. She also loves her job—because it lets her contribute financially to the “family structure.”

But the everyday experiences of many women contradict these images. Home may not be a refuge but a place of violence. For many women heads of households, drooping plaster and broken windows characterize the dilapidated structures of their homes. For most women home is a “second shift” (Hochschild, 1990) after an 8-hour day at the office or factory or even the home office.

But the media is not alone in projecting a distorted vision of everyday life. Much of our research and architecture is framed by an ideology that likewise supports these images—of a division of “home life” from “work life,” of a private from public sphere. A distorted yet prevalent social ideology of women’s “place” in the home can obscure viable options of living conditions and

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dwelling design more amenable to many women. Without considering the social ideological context, researchers—as well as the media—risk inadvertently reinforcing and endorsing it.

#### TOWARD A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF PLACE ATTACHMENT<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter I consider how women, by using and experiencing the dwelling as an occupational workplace, feel about their homes and how these feelings are partially constructed by and reconstruct social ideologies of domesticity and of work. Women and men actively build and interpret their lives from the materials provided by a social structure. “The forces that shape options and channel actions, motives, and belief systems are often hidden from conscious awareness. . . . structural as well as psychological processes mold behavior in ways that the actor barely recognizes. Indeed, structure tends to exert its most powerful influence by shaping one’s perception of alternative options” (Gerson, 1985, p. 193).

The bonds between women and the houses in which they live and work are complex, sometimes ambiguous, sometimes convoluted. Researchers are certainly not the only ones trying to decipher the relationships between women and homes. Novelists and playwrights also work their craft on this conundrum. The oppressive wallpaper in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s story “The Yellow Wallpaper” alludes to a woman trapped inside her domestic role and domicile. Sebastian and his sister Felicia Brinsmead hide their dark secrets in the domestic quarters behind the shop they own and operate in *Just Relations* (Rodney Hall). Sylvie’s cleaning agent in *Housekeeping* (Marilyn Robinson)—the outside air—disintegrates the constructed barriers of interior and exterior, of domestic and public. In Shakespeare’s *The Comedy of Errors*, Adriana and her sister Luciana talk about men:

ADRIANA: Why should their liberty than ours be more?

LUCIANA: Because their business still lies out o’door.

All of the women in the Republic of Gilead (*The Handmaid’s Tale* by Margaret Atwood) work inside houses as either Wives, Handmaids, or Marthas (i.e., domestic servants). The heroine Offred muses, “Context is all.”

As Atwood chillingly demonstrates, matters outside the walls of women’s homes strongly shape the lives within them. Thoughts, values, and actions take meaning from the larger political and social reality surrounding them (Dietz, 1987). Context does matter.

What I propose in this chapter is that women’s attachment to home reflects an interaction between socially structured opportunities, constraints, and expectations and women’s active attempts to respond to these structures. The assumptions behind my approach reflect those different yet complementary positions of sociological phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. Indi-

<sup>1</sup>I wish to thank Wendy Meister and Carole Després for their careful reading and suggestions.

viduals' feelings or subjective knowledge of the world is derived not only from their own *Lebenswelt*, or "lived experience" (Schultz, 1967), but also from the shared realm of ideas known as culture, often institutionalized in political and economic systems (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). These are not the prevailing epistemological orientations among researchers investigating the meaning of home, however. In an extensive and insightful review of the research literature on the meaning of home, Després (1989, p. 8) found that most studies "overlook the impact of structural societal and formal forces on individuals' perceptions, judgments, behaviors, and experiences of and about the home."

I contend that place attachment is experienced as a central and centering bond between an individual and a particular setting, but the emotional interpretation or meaning of that bond can be positive (e.g., contentment, security) or negative (e.g., anxiety, ambivalence, avoidance).<sup>2</sup> That meaning results from an individual's actions, experiences, and expectations in light of, and sometimes in reaction to, societal conditions and norms surrounding those experiences. Our feelings about our homes—those central places we inhabit—are molded by social ideologies as well as our actions and reactions to those social norms.

Contradictions are inherent in our feelings of homes because our lives within them, and the home's role in society, are complex. Homes are pivotal commodities in the political economy, the stages of much of our everyday performances, and cultural artifacts eliciting important meanings to people. Looking at homes as workplaces—in the past and in contemporary times—allows us to get beyond the illusions of the places in which we live to the illumination of what happens in our daily lives. To understand what women say of, feel about, and do in their homes, we need to examine the meaning of their words and actions through the social structure in which they are embedded.

What follows is an exploration of the domestic ideology that underlies many of our building practices, social policies, cultural norms, and research perspectives on the meaning of home and women's attachment to the home. I then discuss another framework for understanding women's relationship to homes: the meaning of work in women's lives. After presenting these orientations, I describe how two groups of women—African-American homeworkers of the 1910s and 1920s, and contemporary middle-class homeworkers—use and experience the home as workplace. I conclude the chapter by advocating how the perspectives used here for analysis can enrich our understanding—and our research and architectural practices—of ways to foster positive social change for women's lives in their homes.

## DOMESTIC IDEOLOGY AND THE MYTH OF THE PRIVATIZED HOME

The domestic ideology that permeates numerous research disciplines upholds a sexually separatist system of public and private spheres—sphere phys-

<sup>2</sup>Developmental psychologists, such as Ainsworth, note multiple types of attachment: ambivalent, secure, anxious, etc. (see Karen, 1990, for brief review).

ically, emotionally, and functionally separate. Women are identified with the private sphere, best exemplified by the domicile and domesticity, and men with the public sphere of labor and politics (see Kerber, 1988, for a review). As Bernard (1981) explains:

The ideology ha[s] several components: (1) a belief that although women were not intrinsically inferior to men, their sphere still had to be subordinated to that of men in the interest of national welfare; (2) a belief that women's sphere had its own contribution to make in the form of running the household competently and taking care of all its members, a female profession to be prepared for and taken as seriously as any other; (3) a belief that women's sphere was a place for emotional sustenance and for healing the hurt inflicted by the outside world; (4) a belief that women's sphere had a duty and responsibility to uphold and transmit the moral standards of society; and (5) a belief that the home, extended to include related moral and charitable activities, was the natural, normal and only concern of women's sphere. (p. 91)

Sociological theorists such as Talcott Parsons and many family historians proclaimed that this separation was essential for the functioning of society. But this position was later refuted by historians who felt that separation denigrated and subordinated women, enforced a class distinction, or was simply a tactic to buttress men's careers and status (see Pleck, 1976). The domestic ideology was neither a cultural accident, a natural condition, nor biologically determined, but rather a social construction camouflaging inequities among the beneficiaries of social and economic services.

Recent critics have gone further and challenged the actual existence of separate spheres of men and women, of public and private worlds (see Sharistanian, 1987). Kanter (1977) claims that modern industrial society and the corporation propagated the "myth of separate worlds" to advance their own causes. The working class, the poor, and immigrants did not live in separate spheres, and both paid and unpaid labor were done by women in the home (Davidoff, 1979). In farm communities, women's and men's roles were complementary, interdependent, and often overlapping (Hansen, 1989). In the twentieth century the distinctions between public and private blur as a consequence of mass media and women's increased labor force participation, among other trends. Nonetheless, and contrary to this evidence, the *social idea* of separate spheres continues to permeate residential development, public policy, and even our scholarship as demonstrated in the cult, and myth, of the privatized home.

Before the eighteenth century in Western Europe and colonial America, the concept of the family as a private nuclear unit was rather uncommon. Domestic privacy developed with the ideological establishment of the family as a private institution and a retreat from urban chaos to an idyllic setting. Domestic privacy was further supported by house-plan writers of the nineteenth century who emphasized a spatial refuge quality in the houses they designed and promoted (Clark, 1986), and by planners and architects of the twentieth century who created the suburban oases of single family homes we know today.



The domestic ideology also became embedded in public policy. Zoning specifications became increasingly used to regulate not only the type of physical structures allowed in a neighborhood but also the household composition and types of activities permissible in the structure. For example, in the mid-1980s between 80% and 90% of local planning agencies had ordinances regulating occupational activity in the home, most of them moderately to exceptionally restrictive (Ritzdorf, 1986).

The domestic ideology also appears in our legal processes and decisions. Only since 1975 has it been unconstitutional to exempt women from jury duty. Previously, such exemptions were justified on the grounds that "the great majority [of women] constitute the heart of the home, where they are busily engaged in the twenty-four hour a day task of producing and rearing children, providing a home for the entire family, and performing the daily household work, all of which demands their full energies" (Okin, cited in Perin, 1988).

The domestic ideology also continues to direct scholarly postures. Many architectural theorists and environment-behavior researchers emphatically stress the privatized nature of the dwelling: "Home is a place of security within an insecure world, a place of certainty within doubt, a familiar place in a strange world, a sacred place in a profane world" (Dovey, 1985, p. 45); "To build a home is to create an area of peace, calm, and security, a replica of our mother's womb, where we can leave the world and listen to our own rhythms" (Marc, 1977, p. 14); "Domesticity has to do with family, intimacy and a devotion to the home, as well as a sense of the house as embodying—not merely harbouring—these sentiments—a feminine achievement, if one of the bourgeois age" (Rybczynski, 1986, p. 75); "Home is a haven in the turbulent seas of urban life. It embodies the familiar, it is the place we feel most comfortable in, where we know better than anywhere what will happen" (Appleyard, 1979, p. 4). These statements imply distinct yet codefining spheres of existence that may characterize some middle-class, Western conditions for employed males, but likely misrepresent the majority of North Americans.

But, the myth of the privatized home is refuted by legal decisions (e.g., *Hardwick v. Bowers*<sup>3</sup>), governmental dictates in the form of zoning practices, building codes, and tax policies, and the nature of mass media, which allows, for example, residents to shop at home, be educated and entertained there, and participate in public debates with strangers while sitting in one's kitchen (e.g., the phenomena of "Talk Radio"). As Meyrowitz (1985) observed, communication technology in the home allowed even the most public or events—the Vietnam War—to be vicariously experienced in the family rooms of our American domiciles.

And more importantly, the myth of the privatized home is belied by the

<sup>3</sup>In the Supreme Court's 1986 decision of *Hardwick v. Bowers*, the Court held that the Constitution does not protect private homosexual relations between consenting adults in their own homes. Justice Harry A. Blackmun, writing a dissenting opinion with one section titled "Privacy of the Home," admonished the majority opinion of its disregard of the Fourth Amendment and the "physical integrity of the home" (*Hardwick v. Bowers*, 1988).

fact that the residence has always been and continues to be a space of reproduction *and* production, of nurturance, leisure *and* work. A myopic focus on the home as separate from the world of work neglects the actual conditions of many households and people of both contemporary and historical times. By understanding the social meaning of work and women's work in American society, we can enrich our understanding of women's experiences of homes as workplaces.

### THE MEANING OF WORK AND "WOMEN'S WORK"

Employment is often construed as the predominant and sometimes only form of work in contemporary society. Besides contributing to the economy, paid work establishes patterns of social interaction, imposes a schedule on people's lives, provides them with a predictable structure, provides others with a base on which to judge their status and taste, helps establish one's identity and self-esteem, allows one to derive a sense of mastery, and may make one feel needed (Stromberg & Harkess, 1988). But unpaid work likewise contributes to the economy, organizes our lives, confers status, and influences how we feel about ourselves.

Obviously work represents some form of activity, but what exactly makes a particular activity *work*? As Pahl (1988) asks:

Does reading this book out of interest become leisure while reading it in order to prepare for an essay in a course . . . becomes work? What if someone who is paid to review the book for a journal were to read enough to write the piece in question but then carried on reading for fun? The mental set may be important in determining what is or is not work. (p. 143)

Work, like the term *home*, is socially constructed. As Pahl's questions suggest, one's personal and social orientation to the task substantially alters the definition of the activity. In North American societies, whether or not one is being paid for conducting an activity or service influences that personal and social orientation. The social relations and orientations in which the task is embedded—the patterns of power generated by political-economic systems as well as kinship, neighborhood, and informal groups—consequently define the nature of the task as work.

What is the meaning and value of the work of women? Until the 1970s most scholars neglected any serious consideration of those who did most of the world's work, that is, women. Fortunately, social historians and sociologists today are rectifying this void. Unfortunately, the research to date is largely limited to educated, white, middle-class women raised in Western European cultures. To women, like men, socially valued work affects their sense of personal worth and value; their sense of purpose and achievement; their capacity to contribute to the wider society; and their independence from the control of others (Stewart, 1990). Nearly half of working women regard their work as a career (Russell, 1985). But another important component of work to women, more so than to men, is the fluidity of boundaries between work and personal life. Since industrialization women have tended to shape their work around family life while men shape their family life around work (Degler, 1980). Blend-

ing and balancing work and personal lives are central concerns and efforts of many women (Chester & Grossman, 1990).

But understanding how women *feel* about their work must also be considered in light of society's perception of that work. The labor force remains highly segregated by sex. The meaning of work for women is complicated by the different meanings attached to women and women's work by the wider culture. In Western countries, men's work is seen as pivotal to the economy, to their families, and to their own sense of worth; women's work simply supplements the family income. In North America, men's historic association of the home with rest, relaxation, and a respite from pressures of the workplace created a different yet dominant perception of women's role in the home. Because men did not associate home with work, they also failed to associate women with work (Cott, 1977). This perception, as evident in daily practice as well as national policy, neglects the unpaid work homemakers do inside and outside the home and devalues the skills and knowledge necessary to run one.

This is why the *definitional* aspect of work is important. When money solely determines our notions about value, and when work is what one does *outside* the home, then women's labors are defined outside the system and subsequently socially devalued in a society dominated by market production.

#### WOMEN'S WORK AND HOME

The research literature on women and home suggests that women interpret the house and domestic objects as symbols of family life, while men are more likely to interpret their attachment in terms of recreation and retreat (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Yet, ironically, creating and nurturing family life is part of "women's work." Saunders (1989) claims that home means the same for women and men because their responses to the question "What does the home mean to you?" are relatively the same. But further analysis of Saunders's data shows that home is more often experienced as a place of work for women than it is for men, and women's work involves tending to the life-nurturing and social-enhancing status of the family. The "labor of love"—this women's work—may be what women mean when they say that home is "family, love, kids." The *product* of women's labor may be behind men's responses of the same.

Women's experience of the home, then, as a place of work is influenced not only by the nature of the task itself, but the task as defined within a social structural and social group context. We cannot ignore the presence of work within the home and its connection to our domestic lives. To develop a full portrait—a mural—of women's attachments to their homes as workplaces, we need to examine all types of work in the home, both paid and unpaid. Unfortunately, I cannot do this in a single chapter,<sup>4</sup> although I clearly acknowledge its pivotal role in understanding women's attachments to their homes.

<sup>4</sup>There is an extensive literature on the sociology of household work (see, e.g., Cowan, 1983; Strasser, 1982), although little of this addresses women's attachments to their homes through this type of work.

My focus in this chapter is instead on occupational—or paid—labor in the home. I explore women's feelings of and attachments to their homes as workplaces, as derived from their labors and actions in the home as well as from the social ideologies of domesticity and "women's work." I have chosen to focus on two groups of homeworkers—African-American women at the turn of the century, and contemporary middle-class women—in order to demonstrate the social construction of women's experiences of and attachment to their homes as workplaces.

## HOME WORKPLACES IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE

The image of the turn-of-the-century homeworker is an immigrant woman at home with her children, rolling cigars, shelling nuts, or knitting garments. Yet statistics reveal a different story. While not only did African-American women at the turn of the century have higher labor participation rates than working-class, white ethnic groups, they also were more likely to work out of their own homes for wages or pay (Pleck, 1978).<sup>5</sup>

To understand the African-American homeworker's relationship to her home at the turn of the twentieth century we must also understand society's expectations of the work of black women, particularly their role as laborers in a society which equated womanhood with domesticity. I first describe the social context of the labor history of urban African-American women of the first three decades of this century and then demonstrate how these women used their homes to both accommodate and challenge the ideologies of their times.

## RACISM AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN'S LABOR IN NORTHERN CITIES

During the Great Migration at the turn of the century, thousands of black women, with and without families, traveled to Northern cities to start new homes and lives. The degraded status of women was one of the prime incentives to migrate, along with low wages and poor educational opportunities for their children. Yet, in the Northern cities racial practices and attitudes continued to confront these migrants.

Before the early twentieth century, black single and married women worked at the same types of jobs as white working women, usually domestic service. But as household conveniences and electricity demanded less arduous labor at home at the turn of the century, new forms of business enterprises

<sup>5</sup>Pleck (1978) reports that in nearly all American cities in 1900, the rate of employment for African-American married women was anywhere between four and fifteen times higher than for immigrant wives. In 1911, the percentage of African-American wives who were employed at home was 23% in New York and 17% in Philadelphia.

offered clerical and sales positions to white women. For the most part, black female wage earners remained outside the expanding industrial economy of the early twentieth century. The social and economic consequences of racial discrimination were evident everywhere in the lives of these working women. They were largely excluded from factory employment (Pleck, 1978), but when they did work in factories they received jobs with the most unpleasant and hazardous conditions and the lowest pay. Racial prejudice stemmed not only from employers but also from white working women who sometimes opposed working in the same places with black women, occasionally resulting in the dismissal of the latter (Ovington, 1911). Some factories placed wire screens or cardboard partitions between white and black women workers (Colson, 1928).

For many African-American women, paid employment was simply not an option. Their work usually supplemented the low wages of men or, in some cases, provided exclusively for the household. Most African-American men were chronically underemployed or sporadically unemployed. The high costs of segregated housing, expensive train fares, and a limited job market after the First World War in Chicago, for instance, made it necessary for households to have multiple incomes (Boris, 1989a). Besides pooling resources and sharing housing with neighbors (Spear, 1967), black women worked in the labor market to make ends meet.

Historically, African-American women have always worked, for pay or indentured. However, this is not a free choice but an adaptation to a system that is historically discriminatory and provided few options for African-Americans. During Reconstruction, black husbands tried to prevent their wives from field labor and generally refused to allow their wives to work for white families (Pleck, 1978). It was often a source of pride that black mothers with working spouses did not work for wages outside the home (Harley, 1990). But while African-American women preferred staying in the home doing their own domestic work rather than going out of the home to economically and socially devalued jobs, their history was typically the reverse. Given the racial and economic conditions encountered, African-American women more likely than not had to seek employment.

#### HOMEWORK ACTIVITY IN THE 1910s AND 1920s

Homework was a preferred, but not necessarily the most preferred, choice of occupation for African-American women in the early part of this century. The desire to work at home was guided by many factors: the difficulties in getting preferable factory, teaching, sales, or clerical jobs because of employers' refusals to hire blacks in these positions; lack of education or experience; ability to determine one's own hours; and avoidance of white supervision. Married women with children just as often took in wash than went out to domestic service, and even single women turned to home sewing or laundry instead of domestic service when denied industrial or professional employment (see Boris, 1989a, for statistics). Among domestic service, the white mistress-black maid relationship preserved the inequities of the slave system. Live-in domes-

tic service was avoided as much as possible, although day work was sometimes preferred.

Consequently, African-American women turned to various labors in the home. Self-employed seamstresses and laundresses were frequent occupations of homeworkers. Home-based dressmakers accounted for about one-fifth of all black women described under the heading "Manufacturing and Mechanical Pursuits" in the 1930 U.S. Census (see Jones, 1985). Since few black women could afford to establish a separate dressmaking shop, they often combined both home and shop (e.g., one successful New York dressmaking-tailor establishment in 1912 used the front room of the family's apartment for the business; Jones 1985). Taking in lodgers was also quite common. At least one-third of black households between 1915 and 1930 contained lodgers (Jones, 1985). While the black beauty parlor was a unique form of homework, these home businesses not only provided needed community services and lent a degree of professionalism to their operators but the parlors also functioned as social centers in the neighborhoods (Erickson, 1935; Jones, 1985). Describing the industrial homework activities of 100 African-American women surveyed in Chicago in the 1920s, Colson (1928) reported in detail the intricate tasks and skills needed by these women for china painting, fur finishing, beading and embroidery, artificial flower making, and lamp shade assembly.

While many homeworkers worked at minuscule wages, some industrial homeworkers advanced their situations by developing branch factories in their homes:

Mrs. A. did not run a shop in 1926 but in July 1927 she took down the furniture in her dining room and one bedroom, placed two long tables in each room and the "branch factory" was open again. When the investigator called, the remaining bedroom and all the vacant spaces in the kitchen and work rooms were occupied by dozens of frames with a tiny bundle of material tied to each out of which the workers were rapidly evolving finished shades. Mrs. A. regretted that the investigator had not come an hour earlier to have seen 158 finished shades that had just been taken away. . . . About ten women were working to the strident accompaniment of the radio. The women seemed to appreciate the freedom of the branch factory. The features that appealed to those who were communicative was the proximity of the factory to their homes, the freedom to come and go at any time, and with beginners the opportunity to learn. (Colson, 1928, p. 45)

Another homeworker had a branch factory in the basement of her home, employing 14 to 20 women who made lamp shades. Still another branch factory occupied the entire living quarters of one couple. These were not sweatshops but "models of sanitation and cleanliness. In fact, they are superior to many of the inside shops in which shades are made" (Colson, 1928, p. 52). The commissions paid to the employed women in these branch factories were quite substantial.

The "culture of community" of such branch factories—based on cooperation and sharing among these working-class and poor women—mirrors those situations in Stansell's (1986) analysis of working-class women in the 1860s and Stack's (1975) description of black women in a Chicago ghetto in the 1960s.

Based on these accounts, the experiences of female heads of households in nineteenth-century New York, and early and mid-twentieth-century Chicago suggest that the urban poor create community networks to combat economic and racial discrimination.

#### HOME AS SAFE HAVEN

Black women met with racism frequently in the workplace, but it was not necessarily confined there. Ovington (1911, p. 163) reported that "race prejudice has even gone so far as to prevent a colored woman from receiving home work when it entailed her waiting in the same sitting-room with white women." Because African-American women were expected to labor, especially at "dirty work," home-based activities never appeared deviant to reformers who condemned white ethnic homeworking mothers (Boris, 1989a).

But when examining the circumstances of racial prejudice, we must be wary of viewing African-American women as solely helpless victims. The cultural distinctiveness of black community life and the attempts by black working women to subordinate the demands of their employers to the needs of their own families must append the "victimization" perspective (Jones, 1985). In this light, the home became a strategy used by black women to earn money out of the realm of white discrimination, abuse, and harassment (Boris, 1989a). Encountering such practices was less likely in one's own home. We might see these women's attachment to their homes as havens of security: financial, social, and physical. As Boris (1989a, p. 34) suggests, "the location of homework—a social space controlled by the Black woman or her family—was its greatest attraction." The nature of the location—within the relative control and context of one's family and community—downplayed suggestions of continuing servitude and protected them from sexual harassment while they continued to earn needed money (Boris, 1989a). In contrast to Italian women homeworkers of this time, who often chose the home as a workplace in order to care for their children (Pleck, 1978), African-American women homeworkers were more likely to choose the home because there were few safe and economically viable choices for them.<sup>6</sup> We must view this choice of work location, and the subsequent role of the home as workplace in their lives, within the realm of restricted societal options and household resources.

#### PRIDE OF PLACE

But while the home allowed a temporary haven for African-American women to avoid white supervision, homework nevertheless compounded the

<sup>6</sup>Colson's (1928) survey revealed that these households were not overburdened with children—only 26 of the 100 black women she interviewed had one child or more under working age. Only one woman mentioned she stayed at home to work in order to look after her children. Also in these families, the men's wages were higher than normal, suggesting that these women had greater freedom to choose homework over the steadier wages of domestic service.

problematic conditions of living in their homes. In New York, as in many other American cities of this time, the tenement homes of African-Americans were often crowded, stuffy, old, and sometimes dilapidated (Ovington, 1911).

Women laundresses worked under very trying conditions. They lugged water several times a day from an outside pump to their hot, damp apartments. In these small, poorly ventilated homes, residents were exposed to the toxic substances used in the laundry work. In cold weather, the laundry had to dry inside since few places had porches or balconies, increasing the problems of crowding, dampness, and children's indoor play.

In the middle of all these difficulties, African-American women sought "to live a life apart from the roughness about them, but close to their church and their children" (Ovington, 1911, p. 168). In New York, women tried to provide an air of "homelikeness" to their tiny apartments. They decorated walls with colorful cards and photographs and found places for knickknacks (Ovington, 1911). "Even [in Philadelphia] the very poorest Negro homes are usually clean inside and out and have a home-like air—[there is] always some attempt at ornamentation, oftenest expressed by a fancy lamp . . ." (Tucker, 1909, p. 601). Among the alley homes in Washington, D.C., black women imaginatively arranged furniture to enhance the comfort of the home under trying circumstances (Borchert, 1980). Homes were orderly and clean. The Chicago homeworkers interviewed by Colson (1928) lived in "all sorts of dwellings." Most of the houses were comfortably equipped, some luxuriously so (one had a grand piano). Colson describes only two homes as unpleasant.

The act of housekeeping was a strategy for providing a highly mobile population with a sense of stability (Jones, 1985). These mothers worked for wages in order to preserve the integrity of family life. Yet at the same time that labor occupied the home, these women also made efforts, through their housekeeping and decoration, to ensure that the labor did not consume the home. While these women were both homemakers and homeworkers, they placed great importance on traditional domestic roles. Domestic responsibilities were symbolic of a higher-class status (Harley, 1990). Clean houses, personal decorations, and good meals were sources of pride in the African-American community. Black homeworkers made every effort to enhance the status of the families not only by providing a needed source of income but also by creating residences of cleanliness and comfort—tasks made only more difficult by the paid labor activities carried out at home.

### COMPLEX BONDS TO HOME: HOMEWORKING WOMEN TODAY

One of the most dramatic developments of the last three decades has been the influx of women into the paid labor force. As of 1988, 57% of all women 16 years or older worked for wages or salary, compared to 76% of all men (see Rix, 1990). When the Roper organization queried working men and women on whether they would continue to work if they could make the same amount of



money and stay home, only 38% of working women (and 27% of working men) said they would rather stay home (see Russell, 1985). Young girls today no longer count on a male breadwinner but expect that they will work outside the home and provide for themselves in the future (Sidel, 1990).

Along with the increasing number of women in the paid labor force is the increasing number of women now working for pay at home. According to the national Center for Policy Analysis, more than 70% of businesses operating from the home are owned by women (Gonzales, 1988). Of these women home-business owners, nearly 40% work in service occupations compared to 3% of male home-business owners who are more likely to have businesses in crafts, repairs, or sales.

In the past decade the homework labor force has become much larger, or at least more visible. A 1989 nationwide survey estimates 6.7 million full-time homeworkers out of a total 26.6 million full-time, part-time, and occasional homework force (Katz, 1990). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Horvath, 1986) concluded that of those working exclusively at home, two-thirds are women. While the "electronic cottage" is often portrayed as a middle-class, white-collar phenomenon, homework is also increasing among low-paid women who work on a piecework basis in a variety of occupations. Corporate employees, independent contractors, and entrepreneurial workers are all home based.

Nonetheless, the social acceptance of homework as a credible work status is still lacking. In fact, homework is an ideological battleground for the social assessment of space, time, and work. Lifting a 50-year ban on homework in the knitted outerwear industry, the Reagan administration maintained that homework should be allowed as a form of free market enterprise. Many associated homework with motherhood (see Boris, 1987) and "the right to be able to support your family . . . in the privacy of your home" (Senator Orrin Hatch quoted in Boris, 1989b, p. 235). Many homeworkers proclaim that their work entails autonomy, self-sufficiency, and independence. Some feminists claim that homework induces social change by creating settings that will allow for a restructuring of work along more egalitarian lines for both men and women, eventually dissolving the sexual division of labor. "If men's work were located in women's traditional sphere, the home, the psychological distinction between women's work and men's work could be lessened" (Boneparth & Stoper, 1983, p. 271).

However, other feminists and labor unions countermand with charges of exploitation. They express concern that homework, and with it women's exclusive attachment and identification with the home, may once again confine, isolate, and subordinate women. The claims by homework advocates of self-sufficiency and independence may be illusionary when placed alongside the daily experiences of some women homeworkers who work in miserable conditions for low pay, are highly dependent upon the demands and conditions set by one client, and are unable to care for their children while working at home and so work when their children are asleep (Christensen, 1988).

Homework—a vicious evil, a blessing, or a form of empowerment? It is

sometimes praised as an ideal work arrangement for mothers who need to earn income and take care of children, for entrepreneurs starting their own businesses, for displaced homemakers entering the work force, and for the disabled facing an inaccessible labor market. But many homeworkers never obtain the professional credibility, economic standing, or legal rights of those working outside the house. As Beach (1989, p. 47) aptly states, "homework" is a value laden term, not just a description of shared work and home space."

This brings us to consider the character of "home space" today. As displayed in the popular media, homes are considered places of leisure, family nurturance, and domestic work—the picture of the idyllic, sanctified home. But demographics do not support the pervasiveness of such home life. Child violence, spouse battering and elder abuse are increasing. The large-scale production of single-family suburban houses has produced a greater workload for women. Households and families "dissolve" and "reblend." Private and public life, good and bad, the Cleavers and the Huxtables, Kate and Allie, the Golden Girls, the Simpsons, and the Bundys reside in our homes today.

In this context, many women do a double shift of work: paid and unpaid. In both they strive for a measure of autonomy while also recognizing the care to others they typically extend, whether that be to clients, colleagues, spouses, children, aging parents, or neighbors (Perin, 1988). Women's lives are typically lived as connections to others (Gilligan, 1982). But political supports and social recognition are not forthcoming. Homemakers work within a social ideology that elevates the individualistic, "self-made" man to mythic proportions while they themselves are often involved in work with low social standing, economic dependence, repetitiveness, and a considerable lack of autonomy and control (Anderson, 1988). Domestic work is, for many women, not only less socially rewarding but also more personally disappointing (Ferree, 1980; Gerson, 1985). While the media often paints a picture of the Supermom, today's women are most likely jugglers, striving to find a way to balance their multifaceted lives. As with working women outside the home, role conflict and overload for homeworkers is already a consuming and stressful factor of their daily lives. But it takes on an even more odious character when such demands are set in a society that economically and politically devalues domestic work and many forms of women's occupational work. But, as we will see, women continually develop strategies to enable their homes to accommodate their complex lives and resolve some of these demeaning characterizations.

What I present next are homeworking women's experiences in and attachments to their homes that result from the ways domestic and work roles are combined in the home space and how those roles are socially perceived and valued. The research<sup>7</sup> on women homeworkers (see Appendix) tells many

<sup>7</sup>I am basing my interpretation and analyses primarily on the studies of Ahrentzen (1987, 1989, 1990), Beach (1989), Christensen (1985, 1988), Costello (1988), Lozano (1989), Mackenzie (1986), McLaughlin (1981), Nelson (1988, 1990), and Pratt (1984). All of these researchers interviewed homeworkers. Studies employing interviewing techniques—as opposed to mailed questionnaires—were more likely to have information about women's

stories, encompassing the variety of personal and social characteristics of the individual, the nature and status of the work, the composition of the household, and other features.

#### ISOLATION AND ENTRAPMENT

Much of our time is spent in the presence of others, or intentionally avoiding others. Compared to that of an office or factory, the location of homework—the home—is not naturally conducive to professional and nonfamilial interaction. But this relative solitude is not in itself undesirable. Many women in Christensen's (1988) study liked the solitude of homework; a quarter of Pratt's (1984) sample of men and women described themselves as loners and introverts, and nearly three-quarters claimed the amount of socialization was sufficient; and 80% of Beach's (1989) small sample of rural homeworkers had a "nongregarious" nature, that is, they were able to work alone and not miss workplace socialization.

But while some homeworkers enjoy the solitude of their homework haven, for others the feelings can evolve into a sense of isolation within their homes. Family day-care providers talk about the loneliness of having little opportunity to converse with adults (Nelson, 1988). It is not only the office "schmoozing" or personal gossip homeworkers miss. Many women feel cut off from a sense of community. For many individuals the workplace has become the primary community in their lives, as residential neighborhoods, churches and synagogues, and even the 1980's health clubs lose their social vitality.

Furthermore, while working at home these women may be unable to keep abreast of trends in the marketplace or profession. Corporate-employed women in Pratt's (1984) study stressed that work at home was detrimental to their careers because they were no longer seen by their bosses (an important condition, they thought, for promotion) and were less likely to hear about professional opportunities.

While the refuge quality of home—its distinction from the outside public world—is touted in the research and popular literature, an extreme position of this quality is when the home becomes an island, isolating occupants from desired social contact. Many women expressing this feeling do not live by themselves, so, in effect, they are not truly isolated (or at least no more so than

experiences and feelings about their lives and home. All of these studies have moderate or large sample sizes (except for Beach's). There are considerable differences, however, in the sample characteristics of these studies: some focus exclusively on women, others include both sexes; some focus on residents in one region, others are nationwide; one may focus on a single type of work, another may examine several different types. All basically include middle-class women; some also include working-class women. There are studies of low-income, ethnic women homeworkers (e.g., Kelly & Garcia, 1985), but they do not address home experiences. The research on contemporary homework focuses almost exclusively on white middle-class men and white middle-class and working-class women. The interpretations in this section are made in light of this research focus.

before). However, the sense of not being able to relate to a more public, social world permeates the feelings of these women.

Interestingly, their comments are couched in a discourse of power and powerlessness. Many homeworkers experiencing this feeling say they are "chained" to or "trapped" inside their homes; "it is difficult to detach from things at home"; "my home is no longer a refuge now—I can get trapped here"; "my home used to feel like a sanctuary. Now I feel trapped because I am here all the time."<sup>8</sup>

Privacy and power are interrelated (Ahrentzen, in press). According to Altman (1975), too much of one's desired level of privacy results in social isolation, too little results in crowding. Yet if we view privacy as a dialectic and a process of choice and control of information, broadly defined, then an extreme position—being under the control of others—is not simply social isolation but feelings of powerlessness and possibly entrapment. As Foucault (1977) points out, the spatial configuration of one's confines—when physically isolated and physical, visual, and informational access to it is not controlled by the occupant—can induce feelings of being surveyed, being controlled, being powerless, being imprisoned. The feelings of entrapment expressed by some homeworkers may reflect feelings of powerlessness in their homes. Their homes may be far from friends, services, or even neighbors. They may have obligations to stay at home to look after their children. They may have little money to spend on entertainment outside the home. Hence, they may feel trapped because of the economic and social constraints that have limited their opportunities to choose being in the home or someplace else.

But most homeworkers do not simply resign themselves to being in a entrapping situation. Rather, they actively seek ways to mitigate these feelings. Some adjust to the situation by making sure they have regular social contact with people, either inside or outside the home. Many make efforts to get out of their homes for part of the day: on walks, runs, meetings with clients, luncheons, etc. One woman said the home used to feel like a sanctuary to her, but now that she was in it all the time with a new baby, she often felt trapped. Her neighborhood became "critical" to her for walking, getting out, and "extending" herself from the home. Several women homeworkers I talked with had formed business networks, often with other homeworkers of the same occupation living in the vicinity, with whom they met on a regular basis.

Neighborhoods may function differently and take on a different meaning for homeworkers than they do for office workers or than they did before (Ahrentzen, 1987). Social ties and a sense of belonging are often associated with the workplace in North American society. For homeworkers without such work communities, neighborhoods may become important in establishing these extrafamilial connections. Homeworkers intentionally spend time outdoors in their neighborhoods to minimize conflict and a sense of entrapment (Ahrentzen, 1990). They may walk or drive to the post office instead of having the postal carrier pick up their outgoing mail at their house. They establish

<sup>8</sup>All quoted material in this section is from respondents in my study (Ahrentzen, 1987).

"work breaks" in which they walk the dog or ride their bicycle in the neighborhood. Those living in close proximity to neighborhood shops and services, libraries and post offices, copy centers and office supply stores, parks and river walkways use them almost daily as a means to establish social contact outside the home.

Women homeworkers engaged in child care and artisan manufacturing in interior regions of British Columbia and Ontario redesignated networks of friends and neighbors as "working" networks: drop-in centers, local play groups, local craft and arts councils, informal trade or professional organizations, etc. (Mackenzie, 1986). The networks acted as sources of contact, advice, and assistance. The household and the neighborhood became work place and living space simultaneously. By doing so, these women altered not only the location of activities but the social meaning and function of home, work, and neighborhood.<sup>9</sup>

These homeworkers are home based but not housebound.

#### INVASION

Counter to this sense of entrapment is another feeling expressed by some homeworkers, a feeling of invasion. The home can feel invaded by employees, business partners, or clients, who enter the house for work purposes. Having clients in the home particularly produces these feelings: "I used to feel that home was a more personal place. Now it's not, because other people are coming into my home, walking through it and seeing my family"; "Having these people [clients] come into the home makes it less personal."

Today's homes are not designed to include home businesses. Often homeworkers convert a bedroom or attic space to an office. But a client coming over for a meeting may have to go through the kitchen, where the spaghetti sauce is simmering and dirty dishes are stacked; up the stairs, passed the bathroom left in disarray from the morning helter-skelter to get to school and factory; down the hallway where family photos line the wall; and passed the kids' bedrooms from which screams and giggles emanate. Finally, the office. The client has passed through the "inner bowels" of the home simply to see some text on the computer screen.

The home can feel invaded not only by people but also by an activity. As one homeworker said, "It is now harder to get away from either work or my family." Another women, living in a studio apartment, could always see her work from any place in her home. She began to associate her home exclusively with work and complained bitterly of it being all around. For a few women, invasion is not from their occupational work or from clients, but from domestic work and family/household members intruding on their professional life.

<sup>9</sup>This may be less feasible in many suburban neighborhoods where the majority of adults work outside the home. Such neighborhoods may be deserted during the day. However, in my field research in both urban and suburban settings, I frequently found several homeworkers working within a few blocks (or apartment floors) from each other.

Again, many women resolve such feelings by taking actions against such potential invasions. They often set schedules for working and nonworking hours and make sure that clients and families observe those hours—not an easy task. They act spatially. One space may be designated as a “refuge” from the others; rules are established concerning who can enter such domain and when. For some women, the workspace becomes a refuge within the home. It is their retreat from the busyness of family demands. For others, very private areas (e.g., bedrooms) become retreats, or any area outside the workspace is considered a retreat.

#### VULNERABILITY IN THE HOME

For women in particular, this sense of invasion may coincide with feelings of vulnerability in allowing relative strangers to enter the home. Many self-employed homeworkers have clients who bring work to them. Because these women may be living alone or working alone for part of the day, they often must meet unfamiliar clients alone in their homes. Women talk about different strategies they use when an unknown client is coming to visit them and they are alone: having a dog, leaving an item of men’s clothing draped around a chair, getting a neighbor to stop by and be seen or at least heard, etc. (Ahrentzen, 1987; Lozano, 1989).

For women in American society, fear and vulnerability are entrenched in the social fabric. Sexual harassment, street hassling, and crime, particularly rape, have devastating effects on women who fall victim to them as well as intimidating effects on all women. Women’s fear of crime is greater than men’s even though for most crimes, women are victimized less (Gordon, Riger, LeBailly, & Heath, 1981). This fear directs their public and private experiences, their movements, their anger, their self esteem. If not directly victims of crime, almost all women are victims, to some degree, of lost opportunity in the public realm. This sense of vulnerability only reinforces the domestic ideology—the separate spheres for women and men—discussed previously.

But homeworking may also extend this feeling of vulnerability to the confines of one’s home. This sense of vulnerability, this fear, limits some homeworking women from expanding their businesses because they will only use clients referred by friends and well-known acquaintances. For them their potential business limits are established by social ties rather than market ones (Lozano, 1989). As fear of public crime restricts women’s use of public spaces, this fear of strangers in the home likewise restricts women’s use of the home—hardly making it feel as a place of privacy or control.<sup>10</sup>

#### DOMESTIC (Mis)IDENTITY

Being visibly at work between 9 and 5 is an integral part of our cultural assumptions about work. Not being so must mean we are unemployed or

<sup>10</sup>Noticeably, the low crime rates in Beach’s (1989) rural community freed women homeworkers of such concerns about personal danger and vulnerability.

"keeping house." Because of the anomalous nature of their work setting, many homeworkers feel they are increasingly identified by others with the domestic work nature of their homes, which in most instances is discomforting for them. After completing a 2-hour interview, a homemaker hesitated when I got up to leave. "I must tell you," she said, "working at home has made me a housewife." Her husband and teenage children do not see her as "working" since she does not display the exterior signs of professional work, that is, she does not dress up and go out. Her occupational position and work activity at home is exactly the same as she had when she worked outside the home: a telephone sales operator for a nationwide department store. Because her family sees her at home all day, they now expect her to do all the housework. When she tells friends she works at home, they exclaim that she now must be able to get all her household chores done. She complains.

For some women, identification with the domestic role is desirable and hence nonconflicting. In Luxton's (1980) study of housewives in Flin Flon, Canada, who "took in" work to make ends meet, their paid work was usually an extension of their domestic work. Taking in boarders meant making an extra lunch, cooking larger portions, changing more bedsheets. Child care in the home meant watching an extra child besides one's own. These activities fit into the existing housework pattern. Nelson's (1990) family day-care providers used mothering as a model for their work involvement rather than the professional model of care. These Vermont women strongly believed that a woman's place is in the home, especially if she is a mother with young children.

But for women who are striving to establish careers, this domestic misidentification of their work is disturbing. The lack of professional credibility associated with working at home is perhaps more serious for women than men because of the historical association of women in the home as mothers, wives, and housewives.<sup>11</sup> Their self-perception of identity and status conflicts with the perceptions of others. Christensen (1985) found that women with word-processing home businesses no longer thought of themselves as clerical workers but as professionals. But their families may think otherwise simply because the homeworkers do not dress up or go out of the house to work. Family, friends, and neighbors drop by or call during the work day to talk about personal affairs, presuming that their women friends at home aren't "really" working (Ahrentzen, 1987; Christensen, 1988; Costello, 1988). Some neighbors ask their homeworking friends if they can drop off their children for a few hours while they go shopping or run errands. The homemaker's refusal to meet with friends or babysit their children may produce hurt feelings and confusion.

Historically, being at home means doing domestic work. Because women's contribution of domestic work in the home has been roundly devalued in this century (Matthews, 1987), it is understandable why homeworkers are upset with the association of their occupational role and status with the domesticated

<sup>11</sup>However, Gottlieb (1988), with a small sample, found men also struggled with their public images when working at home.

home. The advent of women in the paid labor force outside the home may have further denigrated work done in the home by making housework—and the home workplace—more socially isolated and culturally marginal.

But there are also women who synthesize and strengthen their professional and domestic roles at home. For them, home becomes a centering in their lives. These women assume a more positive identification and attachment with the home. Home becomes a place that represents their multiple roles or what many homeworkers verbalize as “all of me” or “the whole.” One woman claimed, “My home now reflects my values, tastes, interests. My work allows me to express my values more than I would do with a washing machine.” For another woman, home was now a place not only for family but also for her creative efforts. She said she liked her home more now than before because “it incorporates all of me—the creative part and the other part.”

It is helpful to view these various feelings—the home as a domesticating emblem of one’s self or as an enabling projection of the “integrative” self—along with the cultures and social reference groups of these women. The rural families in Beach’s (1989) study expressed a highly satisfying life and embraced this home life, which integrated family and work more fluidly. But, as Beach points out, this is partially due to the supporting rural culture in which these people live: an area traditionally valuing family life and independence, a low-consumption environment with few employment opportunities and low crime rates, and the historical presence and legitimacy of microbusinesses (e.g., cottage industries, one- or two-person service firms, artisans and crafters). This rural culture embraces homework as an honorable work alternative.

But in the more corporate-dominated worlds of many urban cities, such a coherent, supporting culture may not be present. Thus, in the future we need to look more closely at how the more immediate social context of these women’s work provides opportunities and meanings associated with the work they do in their homes. If entrepreneurship is more highly valued among one’s reference group, then perhaps establishing a business in one’s own home is more amenable than if one lives amongst a corporate-minded community that belittles small, independent entrepreneurs.

### THE MATERIAL HOME

Working at home is often accompanied by an increased awareness of the materiality of the home, resulting from both spending more time at home and having clients or business partners in the house. The house may seem smaller when used more intensively and frequently. Certain areas of the home or certain qualities and fixtures are more keenly noticed: “I now notice more things that need to be done around the home, things that need to be fixed. I notice them more than my husband does because I’m here so much”; “I didn’t appreciate the upstairs [where her office is now located and which used to be the children’s bedrooms] until I moved up here.”

A common response to this increased awareness is remodeling, not only of the workspace but of the entire house. “Since I spend more time at home I



want to do more remodeling. I want the entire home to look nice. I've remodeled almost every room," claimed one woman with children. A single woman living alone replied, "Before, home used to be just a place to sleep. Now I want to make the entire home comfortable. This also makes me feel better about working here." A married woman with children said, "Decorating now is more important because I spend so much more time at home. I've decorated not only the office but everywhere in the house."

Many women homeworkers talk about being aware of order, particularly clutter. Being in the house reminds them what their homemaker role should be doing: cleaning. Some women "let the housework go," which may cause distress among those women whose primary identity is being a mother and housewife (Christensen, 1988). Some women talk about having to tidy the house before they can work. "I keep the downstairs neater than before [her office is upstairs], . . . I think better when things are neat."

Women who work outside the home often find that their standards of cleanliness and orderliness change ("you don't need to eat off the kitchen floor"), so that much of their previous housecleaning work is no longer necessary (Michelson, 1985). But this is not feasible for homeworkers with clients entering their homes. Women constantly tidy the home in case clients drop in (Ahrentzen, 1987; McLaughlin, 1981). Some are embarrassed and tense when people drop by and the house is a mess. One corporate-employed woman resented the cleaning she did for customer visits to the home and felt the time spent in cleaning was not recognized by her company.

## CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Researchers have suggested that home-based work has a different meaning for women than men because of women's role at home (Allen & Wolkowitz, 1987). What I have tried to demonstrate here is how society's view of women's place in the home and women's work affects homeworking women's attachment to and feelings about their homes. I have tried to give a louder voice to the social whispers that surround women's statements, while also recognizing that women respond to and act on their feelings given the cultural expectations and socioeconomic resources surrounding them.

I am advocating a deeper and richer social interpretation of women's attachments to homes. I am not trying to suggest that we replace an ideology of the home as haven with one of the home as workplace, but that each perspective sheds light on individuals' multifaceted lives. Growing numbers of people are expanding what they do in their homes and in workplaces. Not only is the home changing in relation to the workplace, but it is also changing in relation to many other social activities. Educational software is being purchased for home computers. Home entertainment is competing with the cinema, clubs, and team games. Religion on TV is more popular than religion in church. And there is also evidence that more and more people are finding solace and fulfill-

ment in their work and work communities (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985). They socialize more often with co-workers than neighbors and sometimes even relatives.

Recognizing homes as workplaces and workplaces as communities can affect how we establish policy and produce our homes and communities. Visions about the future of our built landscape are stifled if we limit ourselves to myopic notions of what homes are. We then produce homes such as the *Family Circle's* "Busy Woman's Dream House" (1990), which was designed in response to a survey finding that time is women's most precious commodity. The subsequent Dream House resulted in a computer and fax machine being placed in the kitchen/family area!

A more visionary proposal based on a more critical understanding of the blended home/workplace could be built on Becker's (1986) notion of "loosely-coupled" settings: a core building surrounded by separate but "loosely coupled" buildings physically unconnected to each other but within close proximity. This could be developed at a neighborhood scale (such as Calthorpe's, 1988, "pedestrian pocket" proposal); a residential complex (such as the Trundslund cohousing development where each household has its own personal computer for home and business use, as well as a work center in the community's common house for residents' use; McCamant & Durrett, 1988); or for a single household (e.g., the family farm as design prototype in which "out-buildings" are located on the lot).

But such visions will only occur after broadening our thinking about home and work. Visions of the future home will not get far if we limit ourselves to thinking within the prevailing ideological contexts of domesticity and women's work. We need to critically examine the social relations in which our notions of work and home are embedded. We need to follow feminist scholars who found it necessary to analyze gender relations in conceptual, theoretical, and historical ways before they could make sense of women's personal lives and advocate for positive social change. In this chapter I have tried to maintain C. Wright Mills' (1959) call to examine the intersection of biography, history, and social structure. The *final* validity of these ideas, I feel, will come not from measurement or psychometric strategies, but from the ways we see those ideas fit, and explain, our own personal lives.

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## APPENDIX: CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH ON HOME-BASED WORK

Study	Sample size	Gender	Family and marital status	Location	Type of occupation
Ahrentzen (1987, 1989, 1990)	104	76% women	70% married; 55% with children at home	Los Angeles, Sacramento, Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and Milwaukee metropolitan areas	Various professional, clerical, service, and craft occupations; worked at home an average of 37.5 hours a week
Beach (1989)	15 home-workers, their spouses, and children	60% women	All married with children at home	Two rural Maine counties	Various day-care providers, artisans, clerical, knitted trades, etc.
Christensen (1985, 1988)	24*	All women	75% married; all had children at home	New York City metropolitan area	Clerical and computer programmers/analysts; average 20 hours a week of work at home
Costello (1988)	24	All women	Information not given	Madison, WI	Clerical workers for Wisconsin Physicians Services Insurance Co.
Lozano (1989)	35	62% women	71% married or co-habiting; 41% with children at home	San Francisco Bay Area	Informal work force
Mackenzie (1986)	122	All women	57% with children at home	Interior area of British Columbia and eastern Ontario	Day care and artisan manufacturing
McLaughlin (1981)	91	All women	All with young children	Ithaca, NY	Sales and office work
Nelson (1988, 1990)	70*	All women	86% married; 96% with children at home	Throughout Vermont	Family day-care providers
Pratt (1984)	46	43% women	No breakdowns given	Various parts of the country	Professionals, managers, and clerical; full and part time

\*Only including in sample size calculations those persons interviewed; excluding those persons simply responding to a mailed questionnaire.

# Attachment to Place and the Representation of the Life Course by the Elderly

ROBERT L. RUBINSTEIN AND  
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## INTRODUCTION

Attachment to place is a set of feelings about a geographic location that emotionally binds a person to that place as a function of its role as a setting for experience. In other words, life experiences may have an emotional quality that suffuses the setting to produce an affective bond with the place itself. Attachment and attachment behavior have traditionally been viewed as arising from early life experiences (Bowlby, 1958). This chapter takes a complementary view, that attachment behavior and concerns are life course phenomena. For older people in particular, place attachment is related to experience of the life course and themes of self-identity that span that life course. While attachment to place may be lived either currently or as part of memory, it exists within the larger context of the events of the life course, how they are interpreted, and the need to maintain a coherent sense of self over time.

In our view, place attachment is especially significant to older people for several reasons. First, feelings about one's experiences in or of key former places may be an important part of remembering one's life course and thus of organiz-

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ing and accessing a lengthy life span. Attachment to key former places is one way of keeping the past alive and thus relates to the later-life tasks of maintaining a sense of continuity, fostering identity, and protecting the self against deleterious change. Second, attachment to a current place may be a way of strengthening the self. Given decrements in social evaluation of people as they age (Rodin & Langer, 1980), attachment to a current place may act as a buffer, a means of retaining a positive self-image. Third, attachment to a current place may be a way of enacting or representing independence and continued competence.

In this chapter, we highlight the special significance of place attachment for older people. Immediately below, we present descriptions of three older individuals' place attachments that we shall use to delineate some key issues in understanding attachment to place. Those issues are then applied to illustrating a model of place attachment in later life and to integrating that model with recent literature on the environmental psychology of aging. We next explicate what we feel is a central concept of the model, its particular conception of person and the implication of that conception for attachment to different types of environments, including neighborhoods, the home and personal possessions, and institutions. A final section outlines some key questions that need to be addressed by future research.

Before proceeding, we should note that although some of the concepts we shall introduce are reflected in the existing literature on environment and aging, that literature has only recently focused on place as a dominant theme. Because it developed within an intellectual tradition that emphasized humans as adapting organisms that react predictably to given stimuli (see Altman & Rogoff, 1987, for explication of this perspective), previous work on environment and aging has tended, with a few notable exceptions, to emphasize space over place. To be sure, this focus on functional aspects of person-environment (P-E) relations in late life has yielded important insights. Aging, particularly extreme old age, does bring physical and sensory limitations that alter one's ability to navigate the environment. Because these changes profoundly influence every aspect of the individual's life, it is important to identify their effects and means of ameliorating them. Thus, research from this perspective has explored the changing environmental bounds of late life, the shifting "balance of power" in P-E transactions, and the behavior and affective concomitants of these changes. Nonetheless, the functional orientation is a very different tradition from meaning-oriented disciplines that see humans as involved in "a web of meaning they themselves have created" (Geertz, 1973), and that stress the kinds of affective processes, symbolic constructions, or phenomenology with which this chapter is primarily concerned. Thus, in contrast to more functional approaches, we shall concentrate on the rich phenomenology of persons' experiences of physical space as a real and personally meaningful place.

### THREE CASES

Mrs. Davis, aged 75, has lived in three residences in the Philadelphia area in her life. Her first 28 years were spent in a working-class neighborhood she



described as having "good memories and good friends." It was a "very nice" row house that she shared with her parents and her sister. Her family always had a lot of company in the house, which she enjoyed. Asked if she still had feelings about the place or if it was still an important place to her, she noted that it was, and that she had fond memories of events and people she knew there.

From 1937 to 1953, Mrs. Davis and her husband lived on a street that was "nice. It wasn't far from my parents. It was close to the park, and the bus to town stopped right on the corner." Their move from the house was precipitated when her son was beat up by a group of students from another ethnic group. "We had to get out then," because the ethnic composition of the neighborhood was changing. This is not a place that Mrs. Davis still has feelings about or that is still important to her. "That's in the past. When I pass the street on the bus, I'll look down it, but I don't know any of the people there."

Her residence since 1953 is a twin home in a neighborhood that has also seen considerable ethnic change and is now a high-crime area. Despite this, the place is "convenient . . . the center place for my kids . . . and I'm comfortable here." It is her family home, the place where she raised her children. An important feature is that "I would know how to get around blind. I know where everything is." All in all, Mrs. Davis feels "very close" to this home.

Dr. Winter, aged 87, has lived in his suburban home for 42 years. A retired academic, he has lived in seven residences in his life. Born in rural West Virginia, he spent his first 17 years in the family house, which was "very nice, nicely located, but rather difficult in comparison to modern conditions. There was no central heating or gas. We used kerosene lamps and had fires of logs and coal." Asked if he still had feelings about the place or if it was still important to him, he noted that it was in certain respects. "I have a lot of boyhood recollections of the place, and of the one-room country school I went to; . . . I think of it from time to time, but I haven't been back there for four or five years. The old house is still there though, but I haven't been in it since my college years."

There is considerable attachment to the 4-year local college he attended. It is still important to him, a place of "fond memories" to which he occasionally returns, most recently the previous May to receive an honorary degree. During his graduate work at university, he lived in a variety of rooming houses. Although the rooming houses are now of little importance to him, Dr. Winter has a strong attachment to the university itself. During a 10-year college teaching stint in New York State, Dr. Winter lived in two residences, but now they have no meaning to him and he "never" thinks about them. He spent the last portion of his career at a college in New Jersey. For the first 10 years, he lived in three different residences that were provided as faculty housing, places that have no meaning to him although he has great emotional attachment to the institution for which he worked. He has been in his current house for more than 40 years. Asked to describe why he feels his residence is "home," he noted that he has lived there for a very long time; that he does his writing there, spending, even at age 87, 3 or 4 hours a day at the typewriter; and that "the things that are important to me" are there. Asked to describe those things,

Dr. Winter listed his books, his typewriter, his television, and his photographs, representing four generations of family.

Mrs. Muldoon, born in 1908, was the daughter of a farm worker and as a child she lived in 15 places in 22 years. From her marriage in 1930 through 1945, she lived in nine different places as her husband's jobs changed. Between 1945 and her husband's retirement in 1973, they lived in eight different residences. Their longest stay, from 1964 to 1980, was in an apartment near the one in which she currently resides. The death of her husband in 1979 affected her profoundly; after he died, she moved from that apartment because she found "too much of him in it."

Mrs. Muldoon feels little attachment to most of the places she lived. However, she feels some attachment to the suburban town where she grew up, and more to the final residence she shared with her husband and the neighborhood in which it and her current residence are located. Her greatest attachment is to her current apartment, a rather nondescript one-bedroom unit in an apartment complex: "This will be my last stop. . . . There's no sense in moving. I'm older, I'm more content. . . . I feel more at home here all the time."

These brief profiles bring to light three points that illuminate the dynamics of place attachment in old age. First, whereas a space is any defined piece of territory, a place has personal significance, a significance established through time spent in or with the space (Howell, 1983; Rowles, 1983). Personal experience, either direct or vicarious (who among us doesn't "know" the London of Sherlock Holmes?), and social interaction lead the person to attach meaning to a defined space; as a result, within his or her own identity, it becomes a place.

Thus, the very notion of place implies a conflation of space and time such that attachment to a particular place may also represent attachment to a particular time. This is clearly illustrated by Mrs. Davis's affection for the neighborhood in which she raised her children and by Mrs. Muldoon's sense of ease in the retirement years with her husband that has extended, albeit in a diminished way, since his death. These examples suggest that for older people, the environment may well be an independent language of experience; but it is also a way of talking about important periods in one's life. Additionally, because place derives from space, it is defined idiosyncratically and at any of a number of levels, from the smallest objects through rooms, homes, neighborhoods, and beyond. The older adults described above developed attachments to a home, an institution (a university), and a neighborhood, respectively.

A second important point is that simply defining a place does not automatically lead to attachment to it; nor does occupying, possessing or even having memories of it. Rather, place attachment is a more energized, compelling, or vivid affectual state born of one's linking significant life events, key developmental themes, or identity processes with a particular environment. Thus, the places where Mrs. Davis raised her family and Dr. Winter gained his education take on special meaning in relation to their respective life course contexts, personal meaning, and life achievements. In contrast, Mrs. Muldoon had a good recall of many of the places she had lived, but most had little personal meaning for her. The concept of life course development is especially impor-

tant here, invoking Lewin's (1951) notion of the life space as a crucial contributor to behavior. That is, individuals' unique experiences, both present and past, play a strong role in their development of affective bonds with places by shaping the nature of interactions with and interpretations of physical environments. Attachment depends not only on the characteristics of the place, but also upon personality, needs, life course concerns, and one's own interpretation of one's life. Depending upon the importance and the valence of life experiences associated with a given place, attachment to it may be strong or weak, positive or negative, narrow, wide, or diffuse (Rubinstein, 1990). The negative side of place attachment is poignantly portrayed by Mrs. Muldoon's feelings about the last apartment she shared with her husband. Although she had many positive associations with that home, the painful memories of his death finally forced her to abandon it for a new, affectively more neutral apartment.

The notion of life span development as one aspect of place attachment raises a third major point: Place attachment is not a state but a process that continues throughout life. Mrs. Davis's attachments are from the earlier and later portions of her life, with a gap during the early part of her marriage; Mrs. Muldoon's primary attachments are to homes she occupied postretirement; and Dr. Winter's bonds with place span his entire life. Thus, one can form any number of bonds with place over the course of a lifetime; these bonds may continue even as new ones are formed, and one may become attached to new places at any point in life.

Intersecting here, then, are diverse elements that include the socially constructed life course (culturally defined standards for what constitutes a life course and its key events); the personally experienced life course (how one uniquely traverses and interprets the life course); and the perceived relation of the life course to place. The latter relation is central to place attachment but it is highly fluid in that the nature and strength of bonds with the environment change with the individual's evolving experiences and developmental tasks. Thus, in late life, place attachment subsumes not only past and current bonds but also the relation of past attachments to current-day attachments: those attachments that were active in the past but are no longer active, those that have been more or less continuously active, and those that have been lately activated, including past attachments that may have been reactivated.

#### AN INTEGRATIVE MODEL OF PLACE ATTACHMENT IN LATER LIFE

Figure 1 presents a conceptual model of place identity in later life. Drawing from preceding discussion, it illustrates what we see as three essential elements in understanding place attachment at this (or any) life stage. The left side of the model indicates that these three constructs may be viewed as existing across two dimensions, the collective and the individual. The collective dimension is oriented to and incorporates meaning supplied by the larger

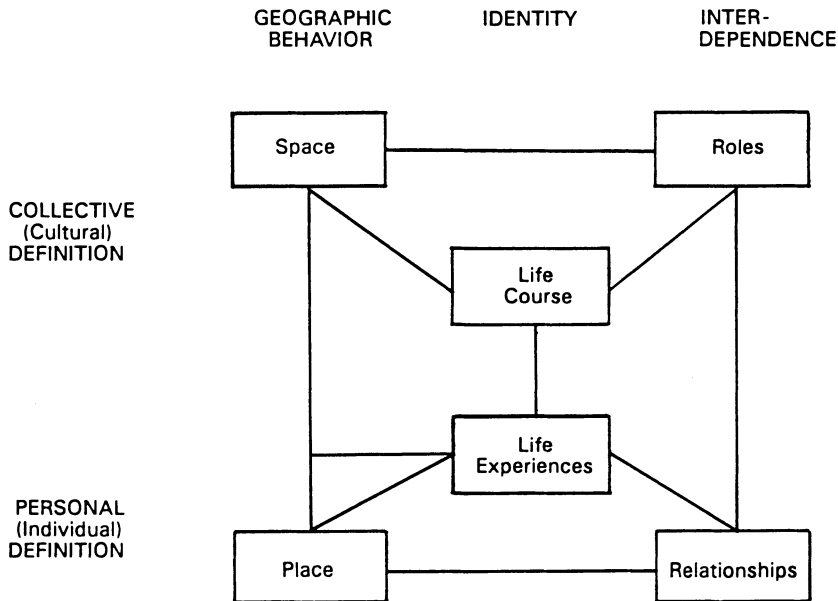


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the structure and development of place attachment.

sociocultural context: social norms, mores, and meaning inherent in a given culture and hence shared by its members. The individual dimension includes personal attitudes, beliefs, and experiences and meanings one derives from them.

Following these two dimensions, geographic behavior represents the person in space or the geographical life world of the person. Superimposing our collective versus individual dimension introduces a dichotomy that is fundamental to this chapter. On the collective level, there is space: relatively undifferentiated territory largely outside the meaningful purview of the individual. On the individual level, place is space to which a person has assigned meaning. For example, a typical row house in a Northeastern city is, on the collective level, simply a *house form*: generally old and working class, a good use of precious urban land, and largely undifferentiated from the row houses on either side of it. But a peek inside may reveal that, for its occupants, that row house is *home*: a richly endowed place full of memories and personal meanings.

Identity is the sense of who one is in the world, distilled from a lifetime of experiences. From the collective perspective, identity consists of the life course as a cultural construct: socially normative and collectively outlined and accepted life course statuses and transitions. But at the individual level, every person creates for herself a particularized version of the collective life course, a life story, depending upon her specific experiences and the meaning she attaches to them.

Finally, interdependence refers to the way in which the individual is integrated within the social life space: the configuration and dynamic of interpersonal relationships. We chose this term carefully to reflect the multi-faceted dialectic of being with others versus being apart from them as an autonomous individual, roughly paralleling Erikson's (1968) crises of individual versus group identity, intimacy versus isolation, and generativity versus self-absorption. On the collective level, interdependence represents a culture's norms, values and conventions about interpersonal relationships: roles, the rules of conduct of interpersonal transactions, and the extent to which independence versus communality is valued. For example, American cultural values stress personal independence and reciprocity in social exchange (Clark, 1972; Sampson, 1977). Independence is the preferred state, financially, functionally, and spatially. Dependency, particularly outside the family, is tolerated only insofar as one can somehow repay others' assistance (Rook, 1984).

On the individual level, Parmelee and Lawton (1990) have suggested that the major environmental theme of old age is a dialectic of autonomy versus security, the tension between independently pursuing life goals versus being dependent upon, and therefore limited by, the support of environmental factors and other people. In the present context, this translates as a dialectic of social integration and autonomy, achievement of a personally satisfying balance of closeness with and independence of one's associates. Thus defined, interdependence is context specific, varying with particular situations, health status, availability and nature of supports, and ability to use space.

#### LIFE COURSE, SPACE, AND EXPERIENCE

We may now begin to examine the process of place attachment in terms of interrelationships among these elements. We next conceptualize and examine the life course both individually and collectively defined as the central force shaping the larger interrelationships among identity, environment, and social processes.

One's position along a culture's normative life course shapes not only the roles and associated statuses one occupies, but also the physical geography one navigates. Further, collectively defined interdependence and geographic behavior are closely related. For example, the normative status passage of retirement—a collectively defined role change based on age—is associated with a shift in one's geographic behavior away from the work site toward other, "leisure" milieux. Similarly, space may affect the roles one assumes, as when availability of an extra bedroom leads to one's taking primary responsibility for family care of an aging parent.

The normative life course also strongly shapes specific experiences that make up one's personal identity. Retirement is again a good example. This collectively defined role transition is translated within the context of personal identity. Past experiences and attitudes, current circumstances, and expectations for the future all shape the individual experience of retirement and its interpretation as a positive, negative, or neutral event. In turn, life experi-

ences, in conjunction with collective roles and values, shape the individual's unique social world and with it his or her particular resolution of the interdependence dialectic of autonomy versus dependency.

#### SPACE, PLACE, AND PERSONAL IDENTITY

Of special interest are interrelationships among space, place, and life experience depicted in the left-hand side of Figure 1. Our postulated association between space and life experiences in essence reflects a basic premise of the P-E congruence models of Lawton (1982; Lawton & Nahemow, 1973), Kahana (1982), and Carp (1987; Carp & Carp, 1984): As personal competencies decline, the importance of the objective physical environment as an influence on behavior increases. "Normal" environments become more constraining as one's capacity to act upon them wanes; the locus of primary agency or control shifts from person to environment as one's activities begin to be dictated not by what one wishes, but by what one is able to accomplish. On the other hand, Lawton (1989) has more recently suggested that people act proactively on the physical environment to minimize constraint, by selecting and adapting their surroundings to enhance competence and achievement of desired goals. That is, not only does environment shape life experience and identity; the reverse is true as well.

We have purposely related life experience to the path from space to place, to reflect the crucial role played by personal experience of a space, or the individually defined life course in relation to space, in development of both a sense of place and affective attachment to that place. Dr. Winter's strong attachment to the university he attended, but not to the residences he occupied there, reflects the crucial role of personal meaning in shaping sense of, and affective ties to, place. The association between identity and sense of place has been described in a variety of ways reflecting the relative significance of objective place characteristics and subjective place experiences. For example, Stokols and Shumaker (1981) posit that place dependence, or self-perceived association with a given place, is determined in part by how well that place facilitates pursuit of desired goals and activities. In other words, place dependence is based on the extent to which objective environmental affordances are compatible with one's personal identity and patterns of interdependence. Insofar as the affordances of a given place are perceived as superior to those offered by other, alternative environments, one develops a sense of attachment to the current locale. Space thus becomes place, and takes on greater functional significance.

The role of personal experience in forging the distinction of place from space is also illuminated by Rowles's (1983, 1984) notion of insideness. Paralleling to some extent Relph's (1976) concept of "insideness" as an aspect of authentic response to place, Rowles posited three aspects of insideness that, in combination, may facilitate emotional bonds with place. Physical insideness is an implicit awareness, an experiential familiarity with the physical features of a place as a result of repeated use. Mrs. Davis expressed this well when she

noted that in her present home she "would know how to get around blind." In contrast, autobiographical insideness signifies a sense of personal history or bondedness with a place as a result of having experienced personally meaningful events there. This differentiation of physical from autobiographical insideness implies that familiarity with an environment, in and of itself, does not necessarily engender emotional attachment to it. Rather, it is the personal meaning that the space comes to have as a function of personal experiences in it that fosters affective bonding with place—in Rowles's terms, autobiographical insideness. (We shall examine Rowles's third concept, social insideness, below.)

Just as personal identity transforms space into place, place shapes personal experiences, as when Mrs. Muldoon was forced to venture to a new apartment to escape the painful memories of her deceased husband that permeated her old home. Places and things are important symbols of the self, cues to memories of significant life experiences, and a means of maintaining, reviewing, and extending one's sense of self, especially in old age (Cooper, 1976; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Kamptner, 1989). In a related vein, Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff (1983) maintain that socialization of the self is effected not only in regard to other people but equally as significantly by "one's relationships to the various physical settings that define and structure day-to-day life" (p. 58). In this view, place-identity is a component of overall sense of self-identity and represents "memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings and conceptions of behavior and experience which relate to the variety and complexity of the physical settings that define [a person's] day-to-day existence" (p. 59).

#### PLACE, SELF, AND OTHERS: INTERDEPENDENCE

The concept of interdependence and its differentiation into collective and individual manifestations are pivotal for understanding place attachment in the elderly. Collectively, old age is, at least in American culture, generally negatively valued as a time of loss of social roles and physical vigor and, consequently, of increased dependency. At the individual level, Parmelee and Lawton (1990) suggest that the effort to maintain an acceptable degree of autonomy is a primary theme of identity in old age. Although the balance of autonomy and security is manifested in many ways, one strong facet is social ties with others. It is a truism that supportive relationships are crucial to continued functional autonomy, psychological security (in terms of knowing there is someone on whom one can call in time of need), and both physical and emotional health in late life (Blazer, 1982; Cohler & Lieberman, 1980). The strongest of these supportive relationships tend to be with proximate others—family members and friends living nearby—and they are enhanced by social integration into the neighborhood environment (Cantor, 1979; Rosow, 1967). Here, the tension between autonomy and security needs is clearly reflected by the (now almost axiomatic) finding (Shanas, 1962) that older people want to live near but not with their children, that is, to have one's children's supportive assistance

readily available without feeling either dependent or burdensome. Rowles (1983, 1984) also accented the interrelationship of patterns of interdependence, or social relationships, with sense of place in his concept of social insideness as an outcome of integration into the social milieu of a place. The dynamic nature of this relationship is illustrated in our vignettes by Mrs. Davis's formation of an attachment to the neighborhood in which she reared her children, and her loss of that attachment when the social fabric of the neighborhood changed.

To summarize, place attachment in late life may be viewed as deriving from three constructs—geographic behavior, identity, and interdependence—as individually interpreted within the context of larger society. Attachment to place develops most directly from life experiences and associated notions of what has been important in one's life and who one is in the world. Further attachments are developed or maintained as part of an ongoing process of negotiating context-specific interdependence (e.g., desiring to stay in an objectively inferior but familiar and loved home; Lawton & Hoover, 1979) or retrospectively heightened through an intensification of "geographical fantasy" that may accompany spatial constriction (Rowles, 1978). Extending this logic a bit further, attachment to place in later life may be seen as the spatial analogue to the dominant themes of self-identity that are significant and have been distilled over a lifetime of refinement through experience (see Kaufman, 1981).

## INDIVIDUAL DEFINITION, COLLECTIVE DEFINITION, AND CENTRALITY OF PLACE

### THE INDIVIDUAL VERSUS THE COLLECTIVE

In this chapter, we take a person-centered view of environmental processes, assigning strong importance to personal meaning and to our view of the individual as meaning maker. Thus, the fulcrum of the model is identity; life experience, shaped by specific circumstances and personal interpretations, is the single most proximate contributor to sense of place. At the same time, one's position on the collectively defined life course shapes personal experiences, and the meanings one assigns those experiences are, at least in part, derived from and evaluated within the larger sociocultural context. Thus, the individual continually assesses and reconciles personal experiences and interpretations of them with societal norms and expectations about the life course.

A good illustration of this tension between the collective and the individual is the notion of "on time" experience (Neugarten & Datan, 1973), which posits that we gauge the meaning of major life events within the context of the normative life course. Events that are "on time" (such as childbearing in one's twenties or widowhood in late middle age) are judged more benignly by both the person experiencing them and society as a whole than are "off time" events (e.g., having a child at 50 or being widowed at 35). Similar differences between individual and collective definitions are evidenced with respect to geographic behavior and interdependence. For example, widowed empty nesters who maintain their large homes may be said objectively to be "underutilizing



space"; young adults who remain in or return to their parents' home are felt to be displaying inappropriate dependence.

Based on this reasoning, we posit that a primary "driver" of the model depicted in Figure 1 is the inherent tension between the collective and the personal. In this view, attachments to place are formed most directly on the basis of personal experiences, and hence of the association of personal identity with a specific geographic territory. However, the strength and nature of such attachments will vary according to the degree to which the place is defined personally, as a reflection of life experiences and their interpretations, versus more collectively according to shared group interpretations and norms.

We suggested earlier that one may become attached to places at any of a number of levels, from small personal possessions to communities and even nations. All such attachments are no doubt formed in the same manner, through association of meaningful experiences with the place or object. But attachments to different levels or types of places are likely also to differ depending upon their centrality to the individual. One's home and personal possessions are, in Altman's (1975) terms, primary territories, very central to one's life, relatively easy to protect and control, more easily personalized and suffused with personal meaning. In contrast, one's neighborhood is at best a shared, secondary territory, controllable only insofar as one's neighbors approve of and cooperate with "defense" efforts. And although one may become attached to a city or region of the country, it is essentially open to all who wish to inhabit it; thus, others may impinge on subjective definition of such public space.

Altman's typology implicitly reflects our dichotomy between the personal and the collective, and affords a vehicle for understanding the dynamic of the tension between those forces. The more primary the territory, the stronger the role of personal as opposed to collective meaning in definition of and attachment to place. As one moves up Altman's continuum to secondary territory, one sees a stronger role of collective conceptions of person, space, and interdependence in perceptions of and attachment to places. As a result, attachment is somewhat weaker and governed by different processes. Public territories are by definition collectively defined and controlled, and attachments to them are weaker, more generic, and personally less meaningful.

Because territories do differ in scale and function, some differentiation of the nature, functions, and intensity of attachments to generically different kinds of places is in order. We therefore turn now to more in-depth examination of attachment processes as they are reflected at three distinct levels of place: secondary territories, represented by the residential neighborhood; primary territories, specifically the home and personal possessions, and public territory, examined here in terms of residential care institutions for the aged.

### NEIGHBORHOODS

Our plaint about the dearth of experientially oriented research on place attachment is particularly acute with respect to neighborhoods. There has been

a tremendous amount of research (reviewed by Lawton, 1986) on such objective characteristics of older people's neighborhoods as age mix, stable versus deteriorating or gentrifying communities, and urban versus suburban or rural locales. Unfortunately, outcomes tend also to be objectively couched in terms of personal activities, social integration, and well-being. The most common measure of older persons' feelings about their communities has been attitudinal rather than affective, that is, tapping satisfaction rather than attachment. As a result, little is known at this point about factors that foster older persons' neighborhood attachment or the mechanisms by which such attachments are formed and function.

Nonetheless, a small but growing general literature implicates life stage and patterns of interdependence as consistent influences on the nature and objective manifestations of emotional bonds with neighborhoods. Ahlbrandt (1984), in a study of diverse neighborhoods in Pittsburgh, found that age and length of residence were positively associated with expressed attachment to the neighborhood. Part of this attachment appeared to be social in nature: Persons over 65 claimed more good friends in the neighborhood and were more likely to identify a neighbor as both their most frequent nonkin social contact and their confidant. At the same time, however, elderly respondents were less likely to visit or exchange instrumental aid with neighbors or to participate in neighborhood organizations (see also Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974). Early research on age-segregated housing similarly indicated that older people enjoy and benefit from interaction with neighbors (Rosow, 1967) or moving into an age-segregated environment (Carp, 1975; Sherman, 1975). More recent research in congregate facilities, however, suggests that interaction rates are at best low and that social networks may exclude functionally less able residents or social minorities (Kaye & Monk, 1987; Sheehan, 1986).

Together, these data suggest that interdependence—the social translation of space into place—does not arise simply from integration with or availability of a pool of appropriate neighbors. Rather, it is a complex function of geography, identity, and interdependence at both collective and individual levels. In traditional neighborhoods, younger residents forge neighborhood social ties (and, presumably, attachment to place) through such collectively defined roles as parenthood or organization membership. With aging, collectively defined integration may wane as persons withdraw from formal neighborhood roles. But specific relationships, based in years of rich personal experiences, may remain strong and help maintain a sense of attachment to the neighborhood. In short, throughout much of adulthood, neighborhood social ties are largely based in collectively defined neighboring roles. With old age, role-based links are eroded and attachment may shift from a collective to an individual basis.

The move to congregate housing brings about a shift from personally defined relationships in one's old neighborhood back to the more collective "new neighbor" role. Unfortunately, because of the special nature of the residential setting, the old rules of neighboring may no longer apply. Mathews (1979) has suggested that moving to special housing is a negative status passage that signifies one's transition to old age and its accompanying dependen-

cy. Because of the associated negative value of such housing, older people may reject their new neighbors as an undesirable reference group and resist the kind of social integration that might foster attachment to the residential environment.

In sum, to the extent that the neighborhood itself and the people in it are positively linked with significant events both past and present, they bolster emotional bonds with place and foster the transition from a collectively to an individually defined neighboring role. But should an old neighborhood lose positive linkages with one's previous self (e.g., as when cherished landmarks are demolished or an influx of new neighbors supplants the old social regime), or a new neighborhood fail to provide a positive definition of self, the crucial bond between self-identity and physical environment may be weakened or even reversed in valence.

#### THE HOME AND PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

The home is a central experiential setting at any life stage. As people age, they spend increasing amounts of time at home, reflecting health decrements, decreasing spatial abilities, and decreased opportunities and roles as well as an increasing sense of attachment and of "placefulness." Previous work on home has largely emphasized territoriality, communality, and the collective meaning of home as a semiotic system in society (Altman & Gauvain, 1981; Dovey, 1985; Guiliani, Bonnes, & Werner, 1987; Rapoport, 1982; Werner, Altman, & Oxley, 1985). In contrast, studies of the homes of older people have again emphasized space over place, focusing quantitatively on such features as objective deficiencies, distance from key resources, safety, environmental barriers, building type, and other discrete environmental elements (for reviews, see Golant, 1984; Lawton, 1986). The central outcome measure is usually well-being, examined in terms of the independent effects of specific environmental conditions within varying "types" of residential settings such as urban cores, senior-only high rises, rural environments, and the like.

In contrast to this objective, nomothetic approach, Rubinstein (1989) has taken a more individually oriented approach, seeking to isolate the discrete psychosocial processes by which older persons form and maintain environmental links and attachments to their homes. Specifically, Rubinstein described how older people use social-, person-, and body-centered processes to facilitate the connection of self to the home environment. This approach views the home as existing at the nexus of individual and collective meaning, blending individuals' unique personal histories with the cultural icon of safety and security.

The central concern of Rubinstein's *social-centered* process is ordering or making order in the home environment based on each individual's unique interpretation of sociocultural rules for domestic order—in our terms, the individual translation of collective norms about home space. Within each culture and subculture, there are a number of general rules for arranging domestic territory that transform socially neutral space into ordered, culturally meaningful space (Gauvain, Altman, & Fakim, 1983; Kron, 1983; Lauman & House,

1970). Each individual creates her own version of these standards in terms of room function, furniture, decoration, and objects, thus yielding a very personalized place that nonetheless conforms to collective notions of the home. This process expresses territoriality and "appropriation of space"; in addition, and of particular significance to vulnerable older persons, it is an expression of cultural competence, control, personal identity, and continued viability.

The *person-centered* process concerns expression of the older person's individually interpreted life course in features of the home environment. Rubinstein suggests that there are four aspects to this process, representing increasing degrees of blurring between the person and the subjectively construed environmental feature. *Accounting* represents the older person's background knowledge of the totality of environmental features within the home environment, paralleling to some extent Rowles's (1983, 1984) notion of physical insideness. *Personalization* represents the most modest degree of endowment of features of the home with meanings whose referents are distinct events or properties of one's own life. This is illustrated by features of the home such as bric-a-brac, for which a person can offer no explanation other than positive affect. *Extension* represents more intense psychological involvement with a home environmental feature, to the extent of there being a direct equivalence between the feature and the "self." The cook's kitchen or the scholar's library are examples here. More common are prized possessions within the home that represent, in some important way, key aspects of identity—for example, personally significant family photos that are prominently displayed. Finally, *embodiment* reflects the most profound sort of environmental representation of the life course in which, subjectively, the boundaries between self and object are blurred. This may be most salient for elders who are long-time residents of their own homes, who now have significant health problems, but who are still able to retain their domestic independence. In such cases, the environmental feature, most particularly the home itself, "becomes" the person, and she believes herself unable to live without the home. In effect, place takes on a role that supplements the self, becoming a tangible embodiment of the personal identity that is itself, at least in its corporeal form, under duress.

The *body-centered* process is the ongoing relationship, within the home, of the body to surrounding environmental features. This process has two aspects. First, *entexturing* represents the fine-tuning of the body and bodily experience to perceived environmental features, especially in connection with daily routines and the experience of comfort. Bodily experience and expression vary cross-culturally (Blacking, 1978), suggesting a collective dimension to this process. At the individual level, attachment to place is intimately linked with the experience of "insideness" and the "lived" and "experienced" qualities of the home environment (Korosec-Serfaty, 1985; Rowles, 1987). Being "in the body," being "with" a home, and being "comfortable" enhance the sense of many elders of being "at ease" and "at home."

Second, *environmental centralization* concerns manipulation of the home environment to accommodate limitations in spatial abilities by concentrating living spaces in central zones. Physical limitations may bring about changes in

spatial routines, and although a sense of attachment may continue to the home *per se*, the events of daily living may be reduced to two or three rooms. As is well known anecdotally, a dining table or comfy chair surrounded by end tables may serve as an office and entertainment and living center for older individuals who have difficulties with mobility. From a functional viewpoint, centralization increases independence by decreasing environmental demands. But symbolically, it may represent a constriction of the life space, an abnegation or de-emphasis of roles and activities that were once central aspects of the self. Restriction of activity space and introduction of prosthetics such as handrails or lift chairs underscore one's disengagement from youth and foreshadow increasing frailty and ultimate demise. Use of physical space in the home is thus a reminder of and a tool for accomplishing the last developmental task of life: relinquishment of lifelong roles in preparation for death.

#### PERSONAL POSSESSIONS (OBJECTS)

While the home may act as the central staging ground for being and doing by older adults, it also acts as a repository for cherished personal possessions. At first glance, the relationship between place attachment and highly valued belongings may be obscure, but in our view it is of vital significance. This salience is based in the role an older individual assigns to cherished objects in helping to make a place (possessing, appropriating, ordering, decorating), and the role of these objects as markers and reminders of past and present people, times, and places; as representing and continuing to maintain personal and social identities; and as symbols of key attachments. Rochberg-Halton (1984) characterized cherished personal possessions as signs or representations of the self over the life course. Consonant with our own perspective, these signs (objects) may be closely affiliated with the self, facilitating and expressing being, relationships, self-concepts, growth, and change. Possessions and their associated meanings are therefore even more strictly personal (as opposed to collectively defined) than is the home.

Rubinstein (1987) described findings from interviews with 88 adults aged 65 and older who were asked to name and describe the significance of objects in the home that were "special" or had "personal meaning." Content analysis yielded characterizations of objects as representing connections to other people, the dialectic of giving and getting, the self, defenses against negative change and negative events, objects of care or of generativity, and objects that represent the past. Although many of the objects referenced places, they related primarily to people, either self or others. Nevertheless, cherished possessions may be viewed as elements of both place identity and personal identity in that they are cherished because of their important roles in the events, relationships, and places that each individual sees as being formative or essential in her life. Indeed, we hypothesize that such key personal objects function ritualistically within each older person's system of meaning. At the collective level, objects may restate basic social and cultural premises from time to time. On an individual level, one role of key objects is merely to be at hand, to

function as reminders, as lightning rods for memories. In this role, possessions restate to oneself the core aspects of one's identity and life accomplishments, and they reiterate the attachments, including place attachments, that have been and continue to be important. With decreased spatial functioning, the role of cherished personal objects as such facilitators may increase.

#### INSTITUTIONS

We have argued thus far that attachment to place differs qualitatively and quantitatively as a function of the nature of the space, a difference that reflects differing blends of the collective and the individual in translating space to place. We have examined this difference in terms of neighborhood attachments, which appear to be based in both collective and individual meanings, and the home and personal possessions, which are more strongly individual. At this point, it will be helpful to examine a third type of environment that is, we feel, more purely collectively defined: the long-term care institution.

Although there is a substantial literature on residential care environments for the elderly (see Parmelee & Lawton, 1990, for an overview), the question of affective response to institutions has received scant attention. There are good reasons for this, the foremost being that such settings are by definition not true homes. It is unrealistic to expect that any sort of residential development for older people be viewed or experienced as "normal"; age-segregation itself sets such places apart from the norm. Analyses of retirement communities (Hochschilds, 1973; Streib, LaGreca, & Folts, 1986), congregate housing facilities (Carp, 1975), boarding homes (Eckert, Namazi, & Kahana, 1987), and particularly nursing homes (Gubrium, 1975; Tobin & Lieberman, 1976) tend consistently if not always overtly to contrast such environments with "normal" age-integrated homes, buildings, or neighborhoods. With respect to retirement communities and other sites that cater to the healthy, active "young old" population, the contrasts are minimal. But as one moves to the more institutional end of the scale, both depictions and evaluations become far more negative: These are not normal residences, nor are they desirable ones.

From Goffman's (1961) seminal work on institutions in general through more recent analyses of nursing homes in particular (Piper & Langer, 1986; Wack & Rodin, 1978), such milieux have been repeatedly depicted as depersonalizing environments that cut individuals off from their previous lives and the rest of the world. In essence, they deprive individuals of their personal identities, forcing each instead into the same collective mold. Shield (1988) pinpoints a major part of the problem in her depiction of the tension between competing definitions of nursing homes as "home" versus "hospital." Routines and regimens, means of dealing with deaths, resident-staff relations, and emphasis on functional rehabilitation versus maintenance all, says Shield, illustrate nursing homes' conflicting goals of providing high-quality medical care versus recognizing that this is a place where people live—a home. She argues that although nursing homes do not meet all Goffman's (1961) criteria for total institutions, they conform to most of the structural aspects he identifies: group

rather than individual treatment, confinement of all activities to a single site, make-work or created activities with no intrinsic value, and a strong resident-staff distinction.

Because of this tension between residential and health care functions, nursing homes often emerge as "nonplaces." Howell (1983) aptly summarized this phenomenon in her discussion of the implications of a "placeless world." Placelessness is, she suggests, characterized by uniformity of objects and spaces as well as by their neutrality, or absence of distinguishing characteristics that would elicit differential response. Thus, the structural similarity of nursing facilities in general, of rooms within those facilities, and of furnishings within rooms combine to create a perception of generic, impersonal cubicles rather than personal living spaces. Placeless spaces are further defined only by the collective activities (e.g., dining room, TV lounge) rather than unique behaviors (playing chess, chatting) that take place there, and by rules that disallow modification or personalization of space (i.e., restrictions on amount and type of personal belongings that may be brought in). In addition, Howell cites the absence of links to the past both individually, in terms of some "durable element of past experience for the individual" (p. 105), and with respect to symbols that would serve to reinforce occupants' sense of a collective, shared past.

In short, the majority of modern nursing homes and other long-term care facilities are "nonplaces" that afford no links with one's personal or cultural past. From our current perspective, they are collectively defined spaces rather than personally meaningful places. The hospital-like atmosphere promotes adoption of generalized social roles such as "old" and "sick" (Piper & Langer, 1986), and deprives individuals of the environmental trappings of self-identity. And, as the work of Baltes and her colleagues (reviewed in Baltes & Reizenzein, 1986) clearly demonstrates, such facilities actively promote dependency rather than bolstering residents' sense of autonomy.

In defense of nursing homes, the majority recognize and attempt to counteract these forces toward placelessness, particularly with respect to links to the past. In most facilities, residents are encouraged to bring mementos and even small pieces of furniture from home; celebration of holidays and religious rituals may, in culturally homogeneous facilities, cement ties among residents and their shared pasts. Many nursing homes post residents' photographs along with their names on bedroom doors. But despite these attempts to create pleasant, welcoming places, surveys of congregate housing and nursing home residents indicate clearly that most enter such facilities not because they are "pulled" toward them by the attractions of such a setting, but because they are "pushed" out of their homes by increasing frailty that makes continued life in the community a practical impossibility (Newman, 1976). The transition is a particularly difficult one, for it symbolizes not only loss of a home or valued possessions, but of status, one's youth, one's health and strength and, ultimately, one's life as well (Steinfeld, 1981).

We have suggested that one of the primary functions of affective attachment to places and objects, for older and younger people alike, is a developmental one, and that such attachments may symbolize, express, and shape the

course of life transitions. The move into a long-term care institution, then, reflects one's failing abilities, symbolic disengagement from the world, and ultimate death. On a more positive note, Parmelee and Lawton (1990) characterize the move to a sheltered care facility as a step toward maximizing remaining resources for personal autonomy within a physically, socially, and psychologically secure milieu. Coupling this perspective with that of Erickson (1968) and other developmental theorists (e.g., Cumming & Henry, 1961), nursing home life symbolizes withdrawal from society and confrontation of death while at the same time making the best use of one's remaining capacities. Nursing homes are places of transition, from independent, autonomous existence through dependency to nonexistence. The resident's task is to make this transition as gracefully as possible, accepting one's frailty and imminent mortality while maintaining a sense of personal worth and dignity.

Thus, nursing homes are, for the most part, collectively defined environments in which individuals have only limited opportunity to assert personal meaning. For those not yet at the last stage of life (and for most who, reluctantly, have reached it), the prospect of living in such an environment is a deplorable one. But at the same time, it reflects a necessary shift in patterns of interdependence that enables the individual to retain those aspects of personal identity that center on continued functional competency while preparing both personally and socially for death.

To elucidate this dialectic and to explore more deeply individuals' feelings about institutional environments, Parmelee has undertaken a series of interviews with residents of the Philadelphia Geriatric Center nursing home. Their responses generally uphold our notion that nursing homes are viewed as spaces rather than places, and that moving into and living in a nursing home mirrors the psychosocial transition from independence to dependency, from active life toward dignified acceptance of death, from identity to selflessness. Respondents also depict the variety of adaptive tactics older people adopt in this situation, and the continuum of adjustment along which individuals differentially acknowledge, accept, and give meaning to their circumstances.

We report here results of in-depth interviews with 13 persons in the nursing home. Respondents were chosen purposively to represent a range of cognitive status, affective adjustment (i.e., level of depression), and objective capacity for autonomy. Interviews addressed residents' reasons for coming to the facility and their initial reactions to it; subsequent adjustment to institutional living and coping tactics they found helpful; relationships with fellow residents, staff, and family members; and their sense of personal control or autonomy in the nursing home.

Of the 13 interviews, 8 reflected to varying degrees a theme of *acceptance* of one's situation and institutional living. These older persons acknowledged the drawbacks and frustrations of such a life, but also recognized the necessity of assisted living; as a result, they were relatively well adjusted to the situation. However, theirs was not typically a passive or helpless resignation, but an active effort to come to terms with one's circumstances and to make peace with



them. This overall theme is exemplified by Mrs. Labov, an 84-year-old woman who has lived at the facility for several years. She summarized simply and eloquently the theme of accepting one's own frailties: "If I hurt now, I'll try my best to get over it. If I get over it, I don't dwell on it. I block it out. . . . It's over when it's finished. What can't be finished, I've accepted. I have to live with it. And I do." She also accepts dependency: "Look, my life is here, this is another world. At times I do feel cut off from the outside world because I can't get around by myself. So I have to depend on . . . someone else taking me out. I manage." Mrs. Labov has come to terms with the "other world" in which she lives. She, like most of the residents, is unhappy with the quality of meals and with sharing a room, but beyond this, she has few complaints.

In her comments, Mrs. Labov repeatedly stressed that the nursing home is not a real home, but that she had come to accept with magnanimity the vagaries of institutional life:

. . . I know it's not a home, it's an institution, and with that, I think it's pretty good. . . . There are things . . . that you don't like, perhaps. But as I told you before, it's not my home, I'm living in someone else's home. So, how shall we put it, I have to adapt to them, they don't have to adapt to me. . . . All in all, I've accepted what it is.

Mrs. Labov strongly differentiated the institution and her life there from "home," and her comments were peppered with admonitions that the two simply could not be compared. Several others whom we characterized as "accepting" took a similar stance. For example, Mrs. Chapman, who had moved into the nursing home from a nearby congregate housing complex, noted that "It's silly to, to consider what would your life be if your husband were still alive, if you were still doing—because you're not living that any more."

Rules and regulations are often cited as primary detractors from individuality and independence in nursing homes, and a strong contributor to what Goffman (1961) termed *institutional totality* and Howell (1983), *placelessness*. Our "accepting" group acknowledged the regimentation of institutional life and its accompanying frustrations, but generally expressed little distress over it. Several noted that close regulation is necessary for the smooth operation of the facility; most found it only mildly incursive upon their daily lives. Mrs. Chapman neatly summarized the tension between autonomous, rule-free living and the security of the nursing home:

Regimentation is something that you have to live with. You know it's there, and you know that it doesn't change wherever you might go given this kind of situation. If you want it to that extent then you have to be on your own and you have to take the consequences of what it means to be on your own.

In the same vein, the eight "accepting" residents tended to view facility staff more or less benignly. Several remarked that staff, like residents, were at the mercy of the overall institutional system. For example, Mrs. Labov complained of having her sleep interrupted for medication, but quickly noted that "it's not their [the nurses'] fault."

This adjustment is not easy; as one woman who was initially quite eager to enter the nursing home put it, "When I stopped to see what was going on I said 'Oh dear, what did I let myself in for?' But . . . what could I do? This is my home, and this is where I'm going to die." Neither is adjustment passive; several respondents stressed that one has to "just do it" in accustoming oneself to institutional living. Mrs. Chapman's determination is exemplary: "I just made up my mind . . . if I want to be happy I have to try to do just what I have to do here. . . . I want to make it easy for myself, I want to make it more comfortable for myself. I'm getting along all right." Mrs. Labov is similarly making the best of her situation: "You have to learn. It's what you make of it. And I've made it pretty happy." Mrs. Chapman, Mrs. Labov, and several other respondents emphasized the importance of keeping busy both physically and mentally; maintaining one's cognitive faculties was a primary and actively pursued goal.

The residents who did not fit our description of "accepting" institutional life tended to be somewhat angry at their fate, the institution, and particularly the staff. The three men and two women noted specifically that they had not, and perhaps could not, adjust well to their living situation. One, who at 69 years of age dubbed himself "the baby around here," stated very simply, "I can never adjust. It's impossible." The other two men noted that it was a problem of "learning the ropes," behaving oneself, and not antagonizing the staff, who were regarded by all in this group as at best uninterested and at worst hostile and punitive. One noted that staff "want to show you they're the boss. . . . This is a school here. I'm one of the rookies. . . . I got to get used to saying 'please'." The other began talking about the staff but suddenly terminated the interview with the comment "I'm getting in too deep."

In review, these interviews illustrate clearly the problems of retaining meaningful and satisfying interpretation of independence, self, and place in the face of both collective and individual processes that are radically different from one's former life. With respect to independence, respondents who expressed positive adjustment to nursing home life stressed the sharp dichotomy between present and former activities and the importance of fending for oneself as much as possible. Although limited in scope and defined far more personally (in terms of remaining capacities) than collectively, the typically American valuation of independence continued to be an important theme. Similarly, accepting respondents were willing to some degree to redefine their personal identities, to allow their former selves to change as their bodies and life situations did. They were more or less willing to shed those aspects of themselves that were collectively defined in the "outside world"—their roles as spouse, career person, community leader. Yet their frequent use of self-descriptors such as "I'm the type of person who . . ." revealed that they retained a clear sense of themselves as individuals, independent of their previous, socially proscribed roles. Finally, from a geographic perspective, all recognized the inherent placelessness of the nursing home, the physical and social dynamic that prevented it from being a real home. But they also ac-

knowledge of the necessity of that dynamic and its role in facilitating their continued well-being.

## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

This chapter has introduced a model of place attachment in old age and has sketched out some of its key features. The model emphasizes the dialectic of the community and the individual. Further, within this dialectic, it has located issues of personal identity as central to attachment to place in later life and as mediating the spheres of geography and social interdependence. It has implicated issues of scale in the polarity of community and identity. In our view, personal identity is individually distilled from events significant in the framework of the normatively defined life course; it is within this "insider's perspective"—generally assessed qualitatively—that we discover the roots of place attachment in later life.

This perspective is a viable complement to that which has dominated studies in the environment and aging arena, but because it is new, few empirical studies exist. It is not difficult, however, to identify important avenues for exploring this model, as well as existing content areas to which such an approach is germane. For example, we have cited a number of conceptual works that deal with the phenomenology of place in relation to personal identity. However, with a few notable exceptions (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Rochberg-Halton, 1984; Rubinstein, 1987, 1990), there has been little empirical work on this topic. This is an area that is ripe for further exploration to elucidate the dimensions of meanings places may have, how those meanings are formed and maintained, and their mutual influence on sense of self. Similarly, although the dynamic of collective versus individual meaning has been examined in some detail with respect to identity (Neugarten & Datan, 1973) and place (Altman & Gauvain, 1981), the juncture of those realms, and their interrelationships with interdependency concerns, are largely unexplored. Particularly interesting is a methodological issue: How do collective definitions of aging, place, and relationships color our investigations of place attachment in old age? Luborsky (1990) has suggested that norms in fact affect solicitations of narratives; thus, analysis of our qualitative methods may yield as rich a source of information as do their fruit.

Substantively, the topic of changing environments, sometimes dramatic and painful, has been largely neglected in research and theory. While forced disruptions and involuntary moves have been well researched in some environments inhabited by senior adults, this has yielded at best inconsistent findings (Altman & Parmelee, 1992). Senior adults internally monitor and accord meaning to external environmental cues. How they balance these against functional decrements and the residual affectual "pull" of changing, but long inhabited, neighborhood environments, requires examination.

If, as we have argued, personal identity, geographic behavior, and interdependence form a set of linked concepts that relate to place attachment, then the issue of residential moves clearly involves difficult choices that directly pertain to self-identity. Aging in place, sunbelt migration, reverse migration, filling the empty nest, local relocation, structural differences among urban, suburban and rural environments, and the rising availability of residences designed around a concern for health care are increasingly incorporated in a complex process of personal monitoring and residential decision making. Certainly, a greater understanding of the details of such a process of self-monitoring, self-awareness, choice awareness and triggers for moves or for staying put (Lawton, 1986) is required for informed social and health care policy.

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# Symbolic Ties That Bind

PLACE ATTACHMENT IN THE PLAZA

SETHA M. LOW

## INTRODUCTION

*Place attachment* is the symbolic relationship formed by people giving culturally shared emotional/affective meanings to a particular space or piece of land that provides the basis for the individual's and group's understanding of and relation to the environment. This chapter applies this definition of place attachment in order to identify a range of types of place attachment in cultural terms, and to present ethnographic examples of each type. It is argued that while there are often strong individualistic feelings that may be unique to specific people, these feelings are embedded in a cultural milieu. Thus, place attachment is more than an emotional and cognitive experience, and includes cultural beliefs and practices that link people to place. This discussion is illustrated with examples of how these often overlapping place attachment processes occur in the central plaza of San José, Costa Rica. Future research directions for a cultural analysis of place attachment are suggested as part of the conclusion.

## A CULTURAL DEFINITION OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

At a psychological level place attachment refers to the cognitive and emotional linkage of an individual to a particular setting or environment (Hunter,

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1974) and has been discussed in terms of place identity (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983), belonging relationships (Seamon, 1982), people, space, and environment structures (Seamon, 1989), and community identity and symbolic placement (Hummon, 1986). In his discussion of place and placelessness, Relph (1976) asserts that place attachment is so basic that "to be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and to know your place" (p. 1).

A cultural definition of place attachment implies that for most people there is a transformation of the experience of a space or piece of land into a culturally meaningful and shared symbol, that is, place. Richardson (1982) argues that this phenomenology refers to how people associate places with cultural attributes, such as, in Cartago, Costa Rica, the ordering of nature and behavior in the *plaza* defining it as a place of "culture" or proper behavior, or the disorder and rapid pace of the marketplace making it a place of "clever" or smart people. He suggests that the symbol (*plaza*, marketplace) evokes the transformed experience and reminds us of its cultural meanings and social implications. But for many places the relationship of space or land and the group is not necessarily through the transformation of experience. Place attachment can apply to mythical places that a person never experiences, or it can apply to land ownership and citizenship that symbolically encode sociopolitical as well as experiential meanings. The most important aspect of the definition, therefore, is that there is a symbolic relationship between the individual/group and the place, that may in fact evoke a culturally valued experience, but may just as well derive meaning from other sociopolitical, historical, and cultural sources.

#### A TYPOLOGY OF CULTURAL PLACE ATTACHMENT

The concept has grown through attention to cultural aspects of the built environment and spatial form (Lawrence & Low, 1990) and comparative studies of housing, culture, and design (Low & Chambers, 1989) and draws upon fieldwork experience in Third World housing and community development (Low, 1988), on rural vernacular architecture (Low & Ryan, 1985), and urban public space (Low, in press). From these sources a theoretical typology emerged through a process of qualitative analysis (Strauss, 1987).

The proposed typology of place attachment is made up of six kinds of symbolic linkage of people and land. The types refer to the nature of the people's linkage and include: (1) genealogical linkage to the land through history or family lineage; (2) linkage through loss of land or destruction of community; (3) economic linkage to land through ownership, inheritance, and politics; (4) cosmological linkage through religious, spiritual, or mythological relationship; (5) linkage through both religious and secular pilgrimage and celebratory, cultural events; and (6) narrative linkage through storytelling and place naming. These are general categories and in some cases contain many subsets or subtypes of attachment; cultures and places do not neatly fall into any one type or category, are not mutually exclusive and often overlap in content.

Another way to define these types is in terms of the processes of place attachment. In other words, genealogical place attachment is maintained, strengthened, and acted upon by living in a place, by being born or marrying into a household, or by staying in a location for a period of time; the process of attachment, therefore, is the experience of living or being in a location. Place attachment through loss or destruction is activated retrospectively, through the process of losing the place and the subsequent reminiscing and re-creating through memory of a place that is now destroyed, uninhabited, or inaccessible. Economic place attachment begins with the purchase or exchange of a place, often a piece of land, but is strengthened and reinforced when a person works in place or with the resources of a place thus becoming the means of the person's or group's economic survival. Cosmological place attachment is maintained through believing in a place; the process of belief and in some cases religious practice creates the attachment between the individual/group and the religiously significant place. Similarly, pilgrimage and celebratory cultural events create attachment through belief and the process of going to a place or participating in an event, either in actuality or in fantasy. But a person can develop an attachment to a place simply by wanting to visit, without being able to fulfill that desire. Finally, narrative creates place attachment through talking about place, either through storytelling or naming; the linguistic act of narrating is the process by which attachment occurs.

These various categories and processes, that is, genealogy, loss, economics, cosmology, pilgrimage, and narrative, are not so much nominal categories as they are a series of "dimensions in multidimensional space" (Altman, personal communication, June, 1991). This means that any particular place can be described in terms of all of the categories, with some having more prominence in some settings than in others. But it is likely that many places that have cultural place attachment features can be described in terms of all or many of the qualities. In the following discussion this multidimensionality is highlighted, as it is difficult to classify a place into only one category; nevertheless, the distinctiveness of the categories emerges in the emphasis of place attachment type within certain cultures and cultural settings.

### *Genealogy*

Genealogical place attachment refers to the linkage of people and land through the historical identification of place and family or community. This type of place attachment commonly occurs in traditional peasant communities where the relationship of the inhabitants and their village has been established for centuries. In village cultures of Spain, for instance, the identification of place and community is clearly revealed in the language. The word for town or village is *el pueblo*, and this word means both the place and also the people who belong to the place (Pitt-Rivers, 1971). Pitt-Rivers comments that the conception of *pueblo* as a human community expressed in a geographical idiom is illustrated by the fact that people in Alcalá, Spain, refer to an area 10 kilometers away as a street of their town. Further, "the sentiment of attachment to the

pueblo is counterbalanced . . . by a corresponding hostility toward neighboring pueblos" (Pitt-Rivers, 1971, p. 8). Behar (1986), who studied Santa Maria del Monte in northern Spain, adds that it is not just the identification of people with place but also the "longevity of traditional harvesting methods that gives people their sense of the presence of the past. The rural landscape itself, in its general features, bears the arks of its archaic origins . . . the way of life associated with the old system of land tenure has yet to be forgotten" (p. 22). Behar and Pitt-Rivers both mention the importance of place names, and how history is written on the landscape. Fernandez (1988) takes this idea even further by suggesting that place descriptions such as are found in jokes, songs, and poetry provide regional identities that are the basis for cultural distinctions. These narrative-based forms of place attachment further reinforce the genealogical aspects of attachment.

In Spanish America this pattern of genealogical place attachment is retained through both the concept of *pueblo* and through the maintenance of a peasant, land-based way of life (Potter, Diaz, & Foster, 1967). Even in an urban context Logan (1984) employs this dual meaning of *pueblo* in the title of her book *Haciendo Pueblo: The Development of a Guadalajara Suburb*, which describes the growing sense of place attachment, through the building of community spaces and development of neighbor relations, in a new suburb in Guadalajara, Mexico. Almost any ethnography of Latin America will contain some reference to the genealogical relationship of people to their village, land, town, or city such that the name of the place becomes an important identity marker and social locator in time and space.

The Japanese concept of *ie*, a basic organizing principle of Japanese family life, is another example of genealogical place attachment in that it encompasses house, family, and lineage in one idea. The important elements in the *ie* tradition include the continuity of residence in the same place and the family or communality of *ie* living. It literally means "house-belongers," but in common usage refers to "a domestic unit composed of individuals related by blood or marriage" (Jeremy & Robinson, 1989, following Befu, 1971). Thus the concept of *ie* combines place (i.e., the house) and family or lineage; for instance, the rural *ie* was a corporate residential group rather than a house shared by generations of related family members, while in other settings *ie* refers to the house as the setting of generations of family life. Traditionally, the plan and siting of the house influenced the destiny of the *ie*, thus house building relied on the services of a diviner to align the physical form with the auspicious aspects of the spiritual world; in fact, geomancy itself is a science of place. According to Jeremy and Robinson (1989) "its most distinctive feature, however, is that the goal of the *ie* is to perpetuate itself as a unit independent of its constituent members" (p. 32). For the Japanese, the core of existence is the *ie* and its historical ties to a particular place.

In Dore's (1958) study of a Tokyo ward, the *ie* is considered little more than a legal fiction, and only minimal ritual links and mutual obligations to give help in emergencies are maintained. In the city, it seems that the "ward"—the local neighborhood or postal district—is the focus of a sense of place. "Most of

the settled residents had a sense of belonging to the ward in a way in which the Londoner only rarely in wartime has a sense of belonging to his streets or his buildings" (Dore, 1958, p. 269). Children draw their group identity from their ward and engage in gang fights and insult exchanges, while adults rely on formal ward associations for services and short-term economic support. Wards have been semi-self-governing units of the capital since Tokugawa times (Dore, 1958), and many of the families have remained in the same houses since this period (Maki, 1979).

### *Loss or Destruction*

Genealogical place attachment refers to a correspondence between people and place based on family and historical ties that are encoded in language and cultural practice. The breakdown of this correspondence creates another kind of place attachment based on the loss or destruction of place. Although loss or destruction can occur in many ways—through exile, resettlement, disaster, or urban redevelopment—the impact of this loss of place evokes a set of similar reactions. Bereavement expressed in mourning and grieving has been well documented for the residents of the West End of Boston (Fried, 1963; Gans, 1982), who lost their community to urban redevelopment, and for the Appalachian inhabitants (Erikson, 1976) who survived the Buffalo Creek flood. Other studies document the breakdown of social and family ties that were the underpinnings of economic survival among poor residents in center city slums, and relocated residents' sense of social loss when trying to create new suburban networks in Lagos, Nigeria (Marris, 1962), London, England (Young & Willmott, 1957), and Lima, Peru (Lobo, 1983). Certainly, the longing of exiled people and refugees to return to their homeland, and the importance of the symbolic existence of that homeland (as in the case of Israel), suggests that loss or destruction of place is as powerful an attachment as its presence.

Oliver-Smith's (1986) study of the aftermath of the 1970 massive earthquake in Yungay, Peru, presents convincing evidence of a cultural level of place attachment associated with the destruction of community. According to Oliver-Smith, dependence on past understandings and continuity of meaning is a necessary and basic element of cultural adaptation. The conservative impulse, also discussed by Marris (1975), and continuity of place gives the future comprehensibility. This desire for continuity of place was expressed in residents' resistance to moving their rebuilt city to a new, safer location, and their focus instead on the symbolic importance of the four original palm trees that remained marking the *plaza* of the original town center. In Yungay there was grief and mourning for destruction of place, but also traditional pride of community and symbolic attachment to the relocation site closest to the old city.

### *Economics*

Both genealogical place attachment and the loss or destruction of place refer to the relationship of people to land through kinship and time; it is an

historical relationship that produces a layering of meanings or, in the case of the loss of place, the destruction of that relationship leaving only the memories of those meanings. Economic place attachment, while retaining temporally based aspects of attachment, generally refers to a more utilitarian relationship between people and land, such as the kind of attachment produced by ownership of or working in a particular place. Ownership of land is the most powerful example of an economic attachment in that it links people and land through land tenure rules and political negotiations. A classic example is the requirement that a citizen own land in order to vote, a rule that was in effect during the formative years of the United States. Citizenship and political participation are often related to land ownership, in that land gives a person literally a "place" in society. Place attachment in this sense connects place to a sociopolitical conception of the person, rather than a genealogical one. Every

There are examples of ownership as a type of cultural place attachment throughout the literature, in that many cultures consider the ownership of land—individual or community—as basic to the definition of political personhood (Wilmsen, 1989). The struggle for land reform in Latin America, China, and Africa suggests that issues of land ownership and tenure are salient in terms of economic as well as social and political survival. Rodman's (1987) study of the consequences of customary land tenure in Longana, Vanuatu, illustrates this relationship between place attachment and land ownership. In Vanuatu "the place is also its people" (Rodman, 1987, p. 33), and men and land are said to share blood. The word for place means "lived space in which place and people are part of each other" (p. 35). Place, however, is bound up with land and not houses or buildings. Every person must own a piece of land by definition; in fact, it is culturally impossible to not have land. According to Rodman (1987), a person is identified with his place such that a Longanan says that land is "in his name" or that he "holds" land or that it is "his place" (p. 38). Landlessness generates a sense of insecurity and implies that one is a non-Longanan. Silverman (1971) also equates landholding and belonging to a place in his analysis of Banaban identity in Ocean Island, and presents evidence that strong ties to a place can be maintained even when a person is absent.

### *Cosmology*

The first three types of place attachment emphasize the familial, social, economic, and political linkages of people to land. The second three types emphasize the ideological, that is, the religious, moral, and mythological, dimensions of people's attachment to place. Broadly defined, cosmological place attachment refers to a culture's religious and mythological conceptions of the world and the structural correspondence of these ideas with the landscape. Place attachment, thus, becomes the experience of living with the physical presence of and concrete evidence for cosmological beliefs. Land or sacred space is either a representation of the cosmos, or is actually thought to be the physical setting of creation as well as the home of humans, ancestors, and gods.

An example of the representational relationship between religious experience and sacred space is Richardson's (1990) comparison of Spanish American Catholic and Southern Baptist churches where the details of place evoke different cultural experiences. The *iglesia* in Spanish America is a situation of physical immediacy. Christ and the message of suffering through death is conveyed visually through the image on the cross and senuous setting of the mass. Southern Baptists, on the other hand, define the situation in terms of verbal immediacy. Christ is understood through the vocal symbol of the word and resides in the plain setting of the church and in the sermon. Thus, the church and its decor symbolically transform the different religious experiences into physically distinct sacred spaces. The church, in this example, is experienced as a representation of the group's relationship to God.

The best-known examples of cosmological place attachment, in which the landscape is the actual relationship of people to the cosmos, and not a representation of that experience, are Native American groups in the Southwestern United States. To the Navajo all land is sacred; prayers are made to high places where the sun first strikes, and the four sacred mountains are part of the origin stories. The land is saturated with meaning, not simply because of cosmological attachment but also because of genealogical attachment developed during the long period of time that the Navajo have lived there. Further narrative attachment is maintained in the form of place names that reoccur, especially those from Navajo origin stories, so that each community directly experiences the setting of these stories (Francis, 1990).

Ortiz (1969), in his study of the Tewa of the Eastern Pueblos of New Mexico, describes how all categories of human and spiritual existence have an intimate association with the sacred mountains and hills in the four directions and the shrines outside the Tewa village. The origin myth of the sacred mountains, and the migration down the Rio Grande are symbolically reenacted in the life cycle, and experienced through the landscape in the placement of shrines, the design of dance plazas within the village, and the orientation of the sacred village center—the "earth mother earth navel middle place" believed to be a shaft or tunnel that leads straight down into the earth and to the source of all blessings (Ortiz, 1969).

For other cultural groups cosmological place attachment takes the form of correspondence between their myths and symbols, their social organization, and the architectonic order. The design of the settlement pattern, village structure, house form, and even interior room layout reflect the cosmological and social order for the Dogon (Griaule, 1954) and Fang (Fernandez, 1977) of Africa. Griaule (1954) describes how territorial organization represents the form of the seed, a central symbol in Dogon mythology. Village structure, on the other hand, is anthropomorphic, as are the house and living areas, while the plan of the house represents a man lying on his side procreating. The pattern of house form, village structure, and territorial organization thus links cultural ideas of procreation, gestation, and germination (Lawrence & Low, 1990).

Among the Tamil Nadu of South India (Beck, 1976), the correspondence of land and cosmos extends to include the human body, based on the belief that the body must be properly aligned in space in order to benefit from cosmic

forces. Blier's (1987) study of the Batammalila of Africa traces the symbolism of architect-built houses and village structures from cosmology and social structure to the form of the human body, and a number of studies link myth and cosmology with the human body through house form (Bourdieu, 1971; Hugh-Jones, 1979; Tambiah, 1987) and temple architecture (Johnson, 1988). In the Andean highlands of Bolivia, the Qollahuaya's sense of cosmological place attachment is generated by their identification of the mountainous landscape with the human body; places are named according to human anatomy, and sacred places on the mountains are visited in order to promote health and healing (Bastien, 1985).

In Japan, the traditional Shinto religion and rural folk beliefs suggest that there remains a cosmological attachment to the natural landscape including spiritual places such as mountains or a grove of trees. Belief in the souls and spirits that are said to reside in the rural environment is "tangible enough to find repeated expression in both daily ritual and annual ceremony" (Jeremy & Robinson, 1989, p. 59); thus, cosmological and pilgrimage attachment are combined. Jeremy and Robinson (1989) found that in the mountainous region of Tohoku in northeastern Honshu mountain deities are still worshipped as an extension of the *Oshira sama* tale, and festivals are held at the New Year and in summer at temples that flank Mount Hayachine. Even Dore (1958), who studied an urban ward in Tokyo, points out that the people of Shitayama-cho had a strong sense of individuals' dependence on nature and the importance of communion with nature as a way of becoming "aware of the insignificance of human life in the cosmological process" (Dore, 1958, p. 372). Plath (1964), in his study of a town outside of Matsumoto, also writes about the Japanese sensitivity to the landscape and describes life as punctuated with seasonal festivals celebrating aspects of place.

The architect Maki (1979) discusses Japanese place attachment in terms of the concept of *oku*, or "inner space," based on a formulation of centripetal physical space. *Oku* is expressed in what Maki calls "spatial creases," that is, multilayered, dense spatial formations that are found along the original boundaries, walls, and between houses. The depth given to these relatively narrow spaces protects that which is hidden, or inner, and creates a sense of place. "Compared with other peoples, the Japanese have lived in communities of relatively high density since ancient times and hence they have had a feeling that space is always more finite and intimate" (Maki, 1979, p. 53). These spatial creases that express *oku* define the Japanese sense of cosmos. *Oku* as an esoteric concept is used not only for describing spatial configurations but also for psychological and spiritual depth. Thus, the concept of *oku* that is expressed in spatial configurations is linked to the psychological and cosmological levels of existence. *Oku* is expressed in the contrast of the stretching outward of a Western hotel lobby to the feeling of depth and inwardness found in the plan of a Japanese inn, or the difference between a Western church that is meant to be seen contrasted with the *okumiya* or remote Japanese shrine recessed deep in the mountain. This same contrast can be made between Western and Japanese personality. *Oku*, thus, provides a cultural means of relating space and person through this expression of "innerness."

*Pilgrimage*

Pilgrimage to a place, the desire to visit a place, and participation in a celebratory event such as a parade or festival is a special kind of place attachment, in that the experience of the place, although intense, is usually transient, but the idea of the place and its religious, spiritual, or sociopolitical importance lingers on for years. For many peoples, a pilgrimage to a sacred place, such as Mecca or Banaras (Eck, 1982), may be a lifetime goal and may change one's identity and spiritual level of development. In Latin America, pilgrimages are made to sites that have particular healing properties, or to shrines where the petitioner can ask for divine favor and intervention in worldly matters in exchange for a promise of religious devotion. In Japan, shrines are visited in accordance with seasonal festivals and annual ceremonies to insure good fortune and continuing relationships (Dore, 1958; Jeremy & Robinson, 1989; Plath, 1964). At the very least, a pilgrimage involves a change in the rhythm of one's life and the experience of a new environment, thus creating a temporary identification with a place imbued with special meaning. The desire to make a pilgrimage also creates attachment in that the person spends time dreaming and planning for the time when the pilgrimage might be finally accomplished.

Pilgrimages and celebratory events may be secular as well as religious. In the United States, a pilgrimage to the nation's capital in Washington, D.C., is often made by local school children as a lesson in American history and citizenship. Other pilgrimages may include visits to important historical or cultural sites and elements of narrative place attachment, in which one can accrue merit by being able to say that one has been there, or by the moral instruction of the visit. In Japan, Dore (1958) describes a

man who frequently takes his children on pilgrimage to a mountain shrine and who revealed in describing the "spiritual training" which these expeditions afforded, how even apparently simple productive rites can be given some philosophical significance. He tells his children that this pilgrimage is symbolic of life's journey. When they are in the train they are to imagine themselves in their mother's womb, when they leave it and climb to the first stage they are at the Nursery School, at the next stage, the Primary School, and so on until, from the ninth or tenth stage which represents "the most trying age in a man's life, between forty and fifty," it is but a short climb to the top. (p. 373)

This form of pilgrimage links the visit to a special place with spiritual training, rules of conduct, and philosophical teachings. Thus, pilgrimage as a type of place attachment can evoke social, moral, and cosmological meanings through dreaming of, traveling to, and experiencing of, a place.

*Narrative*

Moral lessons that can be learned from the performance of a pilgrimage in some cultures are taught through moral tales linked to the landscape in other cultures. Narrative, that is, the telling of stories, usually origin myths, but also family histories and political accounts, can function as a type of cultural place attachment in that people's linkage to the land is through the vehicle of the



story and identified through place naming and language. A number of cultures have been mentioned as having complex place-naming patterns, particularly the cultures of Western Australia, Micronesia, and the Southwestern United States, but Basso's (1984) study of the narratives of the Western Apache is the most detailed explanation of the way in which narrative works to link people and landscape. Western Apache oral narratives "have the power to establish enduring bonds between individuals and features of the natural landscape, and that as a direct consequence of such bonds, persons who have acted improperly will be moved to reflect critically on their misconduct and resolve to improve it" (Basso, 1984, p. 23). The stories work to shape conceptions of the landscape and Apaches' construction of themselves so that the two symbolic resources—language and the land—are manipulated to reproduce acceptable social behavior and moral standards. Basso mentions that Hoiyer also notes that the Navajos' detailed descriptions of their physical settings suggest that "unless narrated events are *spatially anchored* their significance is somehow reduced and cannot be properly assessed" (Basso, 1984, p. 26). Losing land, therefore, is something that the Western Apache and Navajo cannot do, for the geographical features are used as a mnemonic for the moral teachings of their history.

Basso (1984) describes a number of Western Apache places and their associated stories and then recounts how these places and their accompanying narratives are used for moral instruction. One place known as "men stand above here and there" recalls the story of an Apache policeman who forgot to act like an Apache and tried to act like a white man. Basso then describes a 17-year-old Apache woman recently home from boarding school attending a puberty ceremony in pink plastic curlers. Women normally show respect for the ceremonial by wearing their hair loose; however, the older women only made quiet expressions of disapproval but did not speak to the young woman. Two weeks later the young woman attended a birthday party for her grandmother. Suddenly, without warning, the grandmother recounted the historical tale about the forgetful policeman. After the story the young woman got up and walked off in the direction of her home. The grandmother said that she had "shot her with an arrow." When Basso spoke with the young woman he confirmed that she had understood the point of the story and had thrown away her curlers. This same kind of relationship occurs each time an Apache travels through the landscape; the stories "stalk" them with their moral teachings and directives.

For the Pintupi of Western Australia, people and land are inseparable; thus, the landscape narrative is more than a lesson in appropriate behavior or moral teaching. Myers (1986) describes the Pintupi landscape "as a lifeworld of constituted meanings" (p. 57) in which all discussions of country are punctuated by descriptions of what happened in The Dreaming, the Western Australian origin myth, such that Pintupi can not speak of places without considering their mythological associations. The landscape is interpreted by the stories of The Dreaming; the myth is used as guide to what has been seen, whose ancestry is involved, and based on that interpretation, rights to the use of the land are determined. Thus the narrative, the telling of The Dreaming, actively

links people to place by bringing together two constructs—that of the camp, country, or land with family, relative, or kin.

### *Summary*

The typology presented—genealogy, loss or destruction, economics, cosmology, pilgrimage, and narrative—covers the range of cultural place attachment described in the ethnographic literature. These types can be further grouped into three categories: (1) social aspects of place attachment through family or kinship ties, (2) material aspects of place attachment through loss or destruction of land or ownership of land, and (3) ideological aspects of place attachment through cosmological correspondence, pilgrimage, or narrative. In other words, place attachment in cultural terms reflects the major components of sociocultural life—social, material, and ideological. The next step in the refinement of these ideas is to discuss how these categories apply to a case example, the plaza in San José, Costa Rica.

## PLAZA ETHNOGRAPHY: A CASE STUDY OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

To further explore the cultural concept of place attachment, examples are presented from an ongoing ethnography of plazas in San José, Costa Rica, that illustrate the six often intertwined place attachment processes within one cultural setting. This case study explores place attachment at the level of behavior rather than as a comparative, cross-cultural phenomenon, thus providing another source data for the clarification and exploration of this concept.

### METHODOLOGY

The ethnographic descriptions presented in the following case study are based on a series of three field visits to San José, Costa Rica—from 1972 to 1974, the summers of 1976 and 1979—and two intensive fieldwork periods focusing only on the plaza for 4 months in 1986 and 1 month in 1987. The methods used include behavioral observation of plaza activities, behavioral mapping, sample population counts, photographic recording, interviews with occupants and nonoccupants in the surrounding neighborhood, library research on the history of the plaza, interviews with historians and other academics specializing in the history of San José, and finally interviews with the governmental agencies and private owners of many of the buildings both on and near the plaza. These materials were recorded as fieldnotes that are in the process of being qualitatively analyzed. The descriptions presented are not exhaustive, but are illustrative of the cultural life and social behavior on the original *plaza mayor* of San José known as *parque central*.

### SETTING

*Parque central* was the colonial plaza established in 1751 as a green, rectangular space covered with trees used predominantly as a Saturday and Sun-

day marketplace. On the east side was the cathedral, on the north were the military barracks, and the remaining sides were filled with small businesses, a hotel, the Botica Francesa, and a few private residences. Sunday, after mass, the *parque central* was crowded with religious processions, social events, and local entertainment. The *parque central*, designed to be the center of the growing town of San José, was oriented as a square city block with north-south- and east-west-directed roadways as its borders.

The first major change in the *parque central* was in 1868, when President Castro Madriz redesigned it into a European-styled park with a modern water source. A *verandah*, an iron fence, with gates at the four corners, and a grand fountain and four smaller ones were brought from England to inaugurate the installation of piped water. Guards were added and watchmen patrolled in the evenings, calling out the hour and lighting the gas lamps.

In 1871 the first kiosk was added for the military band to play for the Sunday *retreta*. Electric lights were added and in 1907 the dirt paths were paved into curvilinear walkways. Historical sources describe the *parque central* as a place where the elite families could stroll and gather, although photographs of this period show the continuing weekend markets, youths of all classes playing along the pathways, and groups of workers stopping for their coffee at the *parque central* gate. The images of an upper-class neighborhood park and an urban multipurpose space appear to coexist, one in the writing and the other in the photographs of the period. The European fountain, *verandah*, and gates, however, reflect the establishment of European values as the public symbols of power.

This turn-of-the-century version of *parque central* was not changed until the late 1930s, when the *verandah* was removed during the paving of the city streets. Increased automobile traffic and, more recently diesel bus transport have added to the noise and congestion of the surrounding area. In 1944 the fountain and the Victorian kiosk were removed to make room for a massive concrete kiosk donated by a Nicaraguan industrialist. Below the kiosk was a nightclub that scandalized many Josefinos, and that today has become a gloomy children's library. Throughout this period and into the 1950s, the edges of the *parque central* retained a number of the original private residences of elite families, the Botica Francesa, and the military barracks now in the guise of a school. Cafés lined the northwestern corner and people recalled the *parque central* as an important place to go on Sunday for the evening *retreta* of the military band. But the shift in the major symbols marks the change in cultural focus of the society. The industrialists' interests and new cultural influences from other Central and North American countries were beginning to be reflected in the *parque central* landscape.

Today, *parque central* still retains the cathedral on the east, but is now surrounded by banks, movie theatres showing North American films, bars for tourists, and two popular men's cafés, the *Soda Palace* and *La Perla*. On the shaded benches, middle-aged and elderly Costa Rican men spend their days reading the newspaper, talking to one another, and watching women walk by. On the walkways, shoeshine men compete for middle-class customers; when

they lure a willing victim the activity changes from shining shoes to gambling, with young prostitutes stopping to watch. Pickpockets wander about looking for easy prey, while the policemen chat with passing young women as they rest during their surveillance of the crowd. In the late afternoon, couples replace the elderly men and sit together talking and holding hands. Entertainers sometimes give performances in the kiosk, drawing children from the underground library and people from the surrounding bus stops, and on Sunday morning families still come to listen to the military band.

The dramatic economic changes of the 1950s have included an increase of urban density, crowding, and pollution, and upper-class families have sold their homes and moved to the suburbs. These residences have been torn down and replaced with the symbols of a new kind of economy, one based on debt and banking controls, dependent on North American capital and culture. The growth of the service sector of the economy and increase in unemployment because of the decline of agricultural exports show up in the proliferation of informal occupations of the *parque central* users. Shoeshine men who control the northeast corner, ambulatory vendors along the sidewalks and pathways, small-time salesmen who use the benches as an office now that rents are so high, and construction workers who wait behind the arbor in hopes that some employer will drive by to hire them are all examples of how the *parque central* is now used as a place of employment.

There are also concerns about the perceived increase in crime and vagrancy associated with the current economic crisis and the growth of informal occupations. Most mornings, men sleeping on the benches are awakened with the arrival of the shoeshinemen and elderly pensioners who control the benches during the day. Shoeshinemen participate in drug dealing and the sale of stolen goods, but want to limit the big-time dealers and money changers who are beginning to invade the *parque central* from the central market. They criticize the increasing number of ambulatory vendors who they identify as Nicaraguan refugees fleeing the current political conflict and attribute the increased purse snatching and drug dealing to these "outsiders." The Costa Rican shoeshinemen have carved out the northeastern corner as their territory, where they work an 8-hour day, resting with family and friends who visit when business is slow. They consider the corner to be their place of employment and therefore defend it against the new intruders.

The nature of religious experience has changed as well. The cathedral is still there and provides a strong visual and symbolic presence. Religious processions and other Catholic celebrations begin on the cathedral steps. The views from the cathedral directly link the viewer from the world of the divine to the world of the plaza, and this relationship is a dominant aspect of *parque central* life.

But the *parque central* also accommodates other kinds of religious experience. At noon each day on the northwest corner there is an elaborate healing session held by a "Christian" who wears a rough cloth robe with an animal skin sash. Under the shaded arbor in the afternoon, a multiethnic group of missionaries hold evangelical services that include a sermon, moral directives,

and in some cases healing by prayer. Recent converts also roam the *parque central* and offer to heal passersby as proof of their religious fervor. Although many of the healers are Costa Rican, many are supported by North American missionary groups that have established a language school in another section of San José. So religion, as well as work activities, building changes, and the symbolic "furniture" of the plaza itself, marks the changes in society and the emergence of different cultural values.

But the *parque central* retains its links with the traditional past. It is still a public place of *senorial* men who meet each day to talk and watch women walk through. It is still symbolically flanked by the cathedral, and retains elements of the original marketplace. But these activities have taken on new meanings because of the political and economic context in which they occur, and the activities themselves have been changed in the process.

#### PLACE ATTACHMENT IN THE *PARQUE CENTRAL*

The ethnography of *parque central* illustrates the place attachment processes from a microanalytic rather than a cross-cultural perspective. These examples explore place attachment as an ordinary, ongoing part of everyday living and social activity in this public, center city plaza.

#### *Genealogy*

When I first arrived at the plaza I spent a considerable amount of time observing where everyone sat, stood, or waited and soon learned that a group of three elderly men, one with a cane, and one elderly woman occupied the same bench on the southwestern diagonal walk near the entrance. They were there everyday, from 9:30 or 10:00 in the morning until 4:00 in the afternoon, when they were replaced by a young couple or group of friends waiting for the evening bus. As I began to know more about the plaza and plazas in other towns, I learned that other benches had a similar pattern with regular occupants, so much so that in Heredia, a small city a few miles away, the benches are known by the names of their occupants. If an occupant was ever missing, inquiries would be made about the health of the person, and there would be widespread speculation about why the occupant did not appear.

On a later occasion, when I mistakenly attempted to sit in the place of a late arrival, I also learned that the relationship of the occupants to their benches were often inviolate. I was told by a resident of another bench that I was sitting in Rodrigo's spot, and that he would be displeased to find me there when he arrived. Two other such cases were observed: a newcomer sat in an "attached place" and was asked to leave by a neighboring occupant, and a woman resting was told by the occupant when he arrived that she could stay a bit, and that he would wait to sit down. In other cases the social control was more subtle, with gossip being used to gain back a person's valued place. These cases are particularly surprising considering that most Costa Ricans will

go to great lengths to avoid any kind of conflict or face-to-face confrontation in normal social interaction. The shoeshinemen also defended their benches and had asked me to move when I sat on their "workspace" on the northeast diagonal path. I concluded that these behaviors could be considered a kind of place attachment generated by the identification of place and person over time, and that the relationship of the bench and its occupant was similar to one of a resident who had lived a long time in one house, or the genealogical relationship of a family and a village. It is difficult to distinguish this attachment, however, from possessiveness or social control of the benches, and unfortunately I do not have the data to determine how much of the behavior is place attachment rather than one of these other psychosocial attributes.

I worked in this plaza for over 4 months, at the conclusion of which I could identify and predict where people would sit at specific times of day and had developed a sense of the place identity of most occupants. I returned 6 months later in the dry season, however, only to find that the group of four elderly persons were now sitting on the inner circle away from the plaza perimeter. I was concerned that I had made a mistake about both the importance of place attachment over time and its predictability. I went over and asked the occupants what had happened and whether I had been mistaken about how attached they had been to their earlier place. The seniors reassured me that I was not totally incorrect, that they had sat on the previous bench for over 5 years, years, but because of their failing health and the increase of diesel fumes from the surrounding buses they had decided to move. The new bench in the inner circle was selected because it was sheltered from the noise and fumes of the buses that run on the perimeter of the plaza.

### *Loss/Destruction*

The loss of place that retrospectively stimulates attachment is more difficult to illustrate in that the plaza has remained in the same place since the early eighteenth century. Elements of the plaza, though, have been changed, and those changes have often evoked an emotional response. One of my first experiences in *parque central* was observing an old man cry when he saw that two giant palm trees had been cut down. He wept and cried out that now the plaza would never be the same for him as he had spent his entire life under those palm trees—they were like friends and made his bench a special place. Other plaza occupants were also visibly moved by the destruction of the trees; some expressed their grief with tears, while others reminisced about their personal experiences under those trees.

Other older Josefinos who do not use the *parque central* on a daily basis also talk about the destruction of the elegance of the original plaza, the tearing down of the Victorian kiosk and its replacement with the current concrete structure, and the increase of prostitutes, drug dealers, and other petty criminals, as a loss of place. They tell wonderful stories of how they met their friends and future spouses as they strolled around the inner circle of the plaza after Sunday mass, accompanied by the military band in a traditional *retreta*.

The sense of loss in these stories is not with the place itself, but with the decoration and social participants, yet the stories communicate a sense of place attachment that has been disrupted physically, but not in memory, by ongoing social change.

### *Economics/Ownership*

*Parque central* and the areas within it are not owned by any private individual or agency but are regulated by the municipal government. Nonetheless, the plaza acts as a workplace controlled by a variety of work groups, including the shoeshinemen in the northeast corner, the ambulatory food sellers who set up food stands after 5:00 in the afternoon along the northern perimeter, the lottery ticket sellers with stands on both the northeastern and northwestern corners, the clandestine watch and jewelry sellers scattered throughout, and the construction laborers who wait for pick-up work along the western border. There are also individual entrepreneurs who use the plaza as an office, such as the young man who was selling insurance contracts from a bench. He told me that the bench had become his office since the rents had become so high that he could not afford to maintain one in a nearby building. Most of these work activities have a history on the plaza. There are accounts in novels and in social science reports of the "territories" of the shoeshinemen, the laborers, prostitutes, and sellers of stolen goods. The current ambulatory food sellers are recently immigrated Nicaraguans, but they are only replacing other food vendors who worked in these places before. There is a kind of economic place attachment in process here—quite strong for a group like the shoeshinemen, and less so for the young man who has just set up an office on a bench—and this place attachment develops out of a utilitarian need, that is, to have a place to exchange goods and services. There was a point in my research that I felt that more than anything else the plaza was a public workplace, and that those who worked there were the most firmly attached in term of time and space. The shoeshinemen articulate this attachment by saying that this is their place, that they have worked here their entire lives, and that in many cases their brothers, cousins, and sometimes children will take over their place in the plaza. Thus, work is a kind of economic attachment that does not necessarily include ownership of land, but still implies the control and attachment to place.

### *Cosmology*

The placement of the Catholic cathedral on the plaza, on the eastern perimeter, best illustrates the process of cosmological place attachment in the plaza. The Spanish settlers who placed the 1789 cathedral in this position on the original *plaza mayor* were following a mandated tradition established by the Laws of the Indies in 1571. These ordinances directed the Spanish who settled lands in the New World to organize new cities around a plaza, with the city

hall, police barracks or station, a Catholic church and the houses of the mayor or *caciques* facing this civic center. The cathedral thus became both the physical and spiritual center of urban life, and the plaza became a forecourt or front garden for religious and social activities. The *paseo* or *retreta* of young people on Sundays is tied to the religious role of the Church in that the military band plays at the conclusion of the mass. The citizens of San José then pour down the cathedral steps into the plaza for the traditional promenade. The relationship of the plaza and the front steps of the cathedral are the site of most religious and civic processions and festivals.

Josefinos, when asked about the meaning of the cathedral, say that it represents Catholicism, the national religion of Costa Rica. Its relationship to the plaza further represents the close articulation of Costa Rican civic and religious life. In terms of place attachment to the plaza, the cathedral adds a religious dimension to that attachment, so much so that contemporary Protestant and evangelical religious groups also try to establish themselves on the edges of this quasi-sacred space. The cathedral is the religious center of San José for Catholics, and the plaza is an extension of this cosmological space, thus, the hari krishna, healers, and other religious sects all try to establish their presence. And for some people, their attachment to the plaza is based on its symbolic spiritual importance.

#### *Pilgrimage/Celebratory Events*

Pilgrimage may be too strong a term to describe the kind of place attachment that occurs when families dress up and come from the suburbs to hear the military band on Sundays, yet the tradition of the *paseo* to *parque central* on Sundays and holidays certainly plays an important role in the attachment of Josefinos to their *plaza mayor*. *Parque central* is also the center of Christmas and Easter festivities. During the 2 weeks before Christmas, the kiosk is decorated with lights and wooden stalls line the walkways, selling fruit, candies, and Christmas gifts to the crowd that comes each night to shop. The major avenue that borders the north side of the plaza is closed to automobiles for the evening celebrations, and young men and women walk in twos and threes, throwing confetti at one another in a variation of the Sunday *retreta*. These celebrations, the weekly band music and family *paseo*, and the holiday festivities forge a strong link between the Josefinos and their central plaza. The *parque central* in this context becomes a place that symbolically represents the city and a person's identification as an urban citizen. Even those Josefinos who normally do not sit in the *parque central* on a daily or weekly schedule come at holiday time to renew their identification as urban residents through this symbolic place attachment to the central plaza.

#### *Narrative*

In *parque central*, the large, cement kiosk has generated considerable narrative and figurative language (even from me, as I write about it as a cement



monstrosity). An example is the *dicho* (saying) about the cement kiosk when it was first built in 1949 and had a nightclub in its base instead of the children's library that is there now. The saying goes *el kiosko lo construyo Masagosa, debajo el kiosko es donde mas se goza* "the kiosk that Masagosa built is where the pleasure is" (or where they are most satisfied in the sexual sense of the word). The saying refers to the fact that the kiosk was built by a wealthy Nicaraguan businessman who was a friend of the dictator Somoza, and the ambivalence that Costa Ricans feel about their northern neighbor because of current U.S. involvement in Costa Rica and Central American politics. According to conservative Costa Ricans, Nicaragua represents a model of immorality (they sell themselves politically and are hotter, darker, and sexier), and the tearing down of the Victorian kiosk represented a defilement of Costa Rican and European-linked (white, repressed, moral) *cultura* (culture). However, other Costa Ricans derive pleasure from and exploit the new economic and political relations that the newer cement kiosk represents. Ultimately, the nightclub was replaced by a children's library, which some people feel is a more appropriate civic symbol. The saying, in figurative and metaphoric language, can be analyzed thus as a strategy for expressing conflict about public values, and at the same time I think it demonstrates the attachment that citizens feel to the elements of the *parque central*, and their symbolic meanings. Other narratives are reminiscences about the plaza as a lovely place with upper-class users, yet these reminiscences have more to do with current fear of the loss of place by the older occupants than with the actual deterioration or change in the population over time.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH AND DESIGN

This exploration of cultural place attachment is just a beginning. In this discussion I have attempted to define the concept, develop a typology, identify the processes involved, and illustrate the concept with ethnographic and cross-cultural examples. The next step is to test these ideas by applying the concept and typology to other settings and cultures, thus, modifying what has been presented here to include a broader range of cultural contexts. As the concept evolves, the typology should become more refined and specific to different situations and environments.

There are many ways that the development of a cultural theory of place attachment could proceed. One suggestion is that the cultural processes be analyzed through a matrix of social and psychological processes, people, time, and place properties that are involved in each of these categories. Such an analysis would help to clarify how the categories both differ and are similar to one another in terms of these dimensions, and would help to identify the missing concepts and ideas in this preliminary exploration of the concept. Part of the outcome of such an exercise might also be to define the variability and

dimensions of cultural place attachment so that the cultural part of the concept could be better integrated with the psychological aspects.

The next step in the development of a theory of place attachment, then, would be to integrate the psychological dimensions of the concept with the cultural dimensions presented. Social, cultural, and psychological, as well as economic and political, aspects of place attachment do not function independently, but as part of a conceptual whole. To answer questions, therefore, we need to work out the articulation of the different aspects as they are acted upon in daily life. The notion of emotional/affective attachment both at an individual and group level also must be viewed within a developmental perspective. In other words, how do people learn to attach to places? Is attachment solely an individual developmental process in that place is the context for growth and human development, or does culture provide a framework and set of salient symbols for this attachment process. For instance, genealogical attachment clearly includes the importance of the interpersonal interactions with family members as well as the house/home and its cultural meanings to form an integrated concept of home attachment. More generally, however, the most important future research direction of this work is to include a cultural dimension of place attachment in environment–behavior and environmental design research. Too often the cultural or group perspective is overlooked, yet the out-of-awareness influence of culture is apparent in most attachment processes. In any environment–behavior study of a particular place, one needs to ask questions about the emotional/affective aspects of being in the place. Are all the residents attached to, say, neighborhood, or are there different degrees of attachments that would explain other outcomes such as community involvement or activism. Some examples of this kind of research are touched upon in the chapters in this volume by Pellow, Lawrence, Hufford, and Hummon, but should become standard in environment–behavior inquiry.

Further, the question of place attachment has a role to play in environmental design of places. Designers and planners are aware that people are attached to places; they experience the resistance of populations who do not want to be relocated or to have their neighborhoods changed or modified. A better understanding of place attachment may provide new options or, at the very least, provide better and stronger arguments for the conservation and maintenance of environments that would otherwise be destroyed or totally changed. With the information that place attachment is a significant part of human well-being and psychocultural adaptation to an environment, designers may be able to solve problems of housing and public space in ways that protect those aspects of the environment that are most important for attachment. Examples include cases in landscape architecture in which the community “sacred spaces” were protected in the new community revitalization and renovation, or the concessions made to Native American groups in protecting their sacred lands and hunting rights. Mary Hufford’s research on the Pine Barrens (Chapter 11, this volume) provided a database for the land-use planning model developed by the National Park Service for that region.

This chapter, then, is one step toward clarifying the cultural dimension of place attachment so that it can be utilized in these broader areas of research.

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# Spaces That Teach

ATTACHMENT TO THE AFRICAN COMPOUND

DEBORAH PELLOW

## INTRODUCTION

When I arrived at Somo's, she was cooking palm nut soup alongside the wall of the showerroom, in the shaded area at the rear of the compound. Her sister's daughter came out to help her, by preparing cassava and plantain to be cooked. After bathing, her sister Faustina also came outside to cook, situating herself near the kitchen shelter. While Somo cooked, her eldest son bathed her youngest daughter. Another member of the patrilineage and resident of the compound sat in the yard. But there was no cross-conversation; each was attending to his or her task. There were no apparent physical divisions bounding each activity area, yet territories were recognized and respected. I wondered how each knew where her cooking spot was, how she maintained her distance, or sensed when it was appropriate to chat up one of the others.<sup>1</sup>

Somo's compound composes a sociospatial system that is typical of most compounds throughout the West African city of Accra. These compounds of Accra, in their social and spatial dimensions, are instruments of enculturation, repre-

<sup>1</sup>A visit to Somo's compound to interview her, 9/26/71.

This chapter is based upon the paper "Space Talks, or Socialization in the Compound," given at the invited panel "Spaces and Places: Explorations in Cultural Form and Meaning" at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Chicago, IL, November 1987. A later version was read at the annual African Studies Association meeting, Baltimore, MD, November 1990. The original field research was done in Accra, Ghana, from August 1970 until November 1971, under the Auspices of a Fulbright-Hayes Overseas Research Grant.

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senting a microcosm of the social system of which they are a part. The thesis of this chapter covers four points:

1. Accra's compounds provide an introduction to city lifeways for migrants from the countryside.
2. In their space and spatial conceptualizations, they encode the status associated with age, gender, and relative station in life.
3. As a carryover from the kin-based model, the urban compound perpetuates the group/place identification; activities (associated with society, the group) enacted in the compound space generate a sense of place identity.
4. Compounds also encode new roles, such as that of neighbor.

This chapter explores the compound's system.<sup>2</sup> It probes such questions as how residents interact within this space, what meaning the compound holds for them, how and why they are attached to the compound. I take the position that meanings are tied to what people *do* in and with this space. The compound yard, a variant on the courtyard, in particular carries social meaning. This same space can become a variety of settings for a variety of activities. One can change the context and attachment to it by altering, adding, and removing the semifixed elements, or by changing the conceptualization of that space. The space and its various settings are cultural creations, and it is through social action that spatial attachment emerges.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE

One focus of contemporary environment and behavior studies is that of place identity, which is a substructure of self-identity. It contains "memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings, and conceptions of behavior and experience which relate to the variety and complexity of physical settings that define the day-to-day existence of every human being" (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983, p. 59). This perspective emphasizes the role of a place in the self-concept of a person or a group. Cohesion is in part composed of the psychological identification and commitment to people and places.

<sup>2</sup>This chapter is based upon a study carried out in Adabraka, a popular neighborhood in the city of Accra, Ghana. The original census population included 467 women living in 86 compounds; the sample of 39 with whom I dealt intensively lived in 38 compounds. In my sample population, 13 of the compounds are traditional family houses, 11 owned by Ga. The 13 women interviewed in those particular compounds—the youngest 19, the eldest 54 years of age—have lived an average of 22 years in the same compound. The low mobility factor is also true among the tenants interviewed. Aged 18 to 40, they live in 19 different compounds and include relative newcomers to the city, as well as those who had lived a lengthy amount of time in another house before a recent relocation; their average number of years resident in the current house was 8.

Another element of psychological identification is that of environmental control: if a person can control his environment, he enhances his "fit" with the environment. Territoriality is hypothesized as a key dimension of spatial control (Altman, 1975). Since a strong attachment to place is thought to foster a sense of well-being, coherence, and continuity among past, present, and future selves, places are potentially important symbols of the self or group. Place attachment researchers "emphasize the symbolic contents that make the territories worth defending" (Brown, 1987, p. 519).

#### A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

There is no question that phenomenologically, certain places evoke a special feeling of attachment and/or protectiveness for the user. To understand that experience, I would like to put forward a more sociological approach. This has several components. First of all, it involves analyzing relationships between symbols and meanings on the one hand, and elements of social relations on the other. To do so, this approach employs an actor-centered analysis:

The concept of the "actor" is central to the sociology of symbols and meanings [because] meaning does not inhere in symbols but must be *invested* in symbols and *interpreted* from symbols by *acting social beings*. (Ortner & Whitehead, 1981, p. 5; emphasis added)

Thus, the attachment to the compound space derives from the meanings it holds, and those in turn are tied to how people *act* with one another within the space. This is "territorial behavior" in Sebba and Churchman's terms (1983) as it refers to attitudes and behaviors that are "influenced by the connection between the individual (or group) and the physical area" (p. 194). What is it about particular territories or sites that makes them significant to members of society? As sites are pieces of social space that become symbols within the system of communication, social relations are differentially articulated in different sites.

There is a condensation of values in particular sites, and transactions that constitute the totality of social life may be spatially mapped with specific sites expressing relatively durable structured interests and related values. (Kuper, 1972, p. 421)

In this sense, the compound yard carries significance. In its redefinition from the traditional (rural) milieu, it represents the historical side to the social production of space. Since there is a mental blueprint that guides the structure's layout, "a traditional model can, therefore, incorporate into its timelessness, structures from different times" (Kuper, 1972, p. 421).

Second, my approach features the relationship between social structure and social action, or the macrosocial structure and microsocial relations, as framed by the theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984).<sup>3</sup> Structuration high-

<sup>3</sup>Much of the material on the individual-society linkage which follows is based upon reading and discussions in a seminar I taught during fall 1990, on Anthropology and Physical Design. I am particularly grateful for the input of Carole Spencer, in class and in her final project.

lights the tension between the individual and society as the basis for cultural replication that enables people to adjust their cultures to changing conditions over time. Social systems have structural properties, which "exist only in so far as forms of social conduct are reproduced chronically across time and space" and "social activities become 'stretched' across wide spans of time-space" (1984, p. xxi). There is a *contextuality* to social life and institutions. This context is composed of strips of time and space, within which gatherings take place. This includes the physical environment, not just as something in which interaction occurs, but as implicit to the social system. Contextuality occurs in and is composed of interactions of presence and absence in the shading off of space and the fading away of time. Individuals are socially positioned in the social structure, in their life span, and in their daily lives, and their physical selves are spatially positioned. We might say that the relationship of social positionality to the social system is homologous to physical (bodily) positionality to place attachment.

Giddens stresses the repetition or routine of daily life in which people actively participate, by means of which they re-create their social interactions and cultural rules and norms. Spatial locales provide the settings and contexts of interaction that are internally regionalized. The concept of the setting or activity area (Kent, 1984), in this case the compound as a context for one or many settings, is important because it links up space, place, and time. The same space can become a variety of settings, and here the emphasis is on a conceptual division and on time—the use of the compound yard over time for various activities. Two types of activity go on: those that are fixed, and those that are continuous. The compound yard is important, for it is here that activities come together. It is also a testing ground for new interactions and relationships.

The African compound, as a context, has boundaries that define the interactions. The boundaries may be physical, they may be conceptual, rigid, or permeable, of long or short duration. People live in physical proximity to one another; their copresence is interconnected and regulated by the *durée* of daily existence. The allocation and function of space, as well as attachment to space, reflects the dialectic oppositions that a people perceive, albeit out-of-awareness, in their social organization. It follows that people divide up their space and form attachments to that space in a manner that is congruent with their social divisions (see Kent, 1984; Michelson, 1987).

We know that people use domestic space to express distinctions of age, sex, and rank (see Douglas, 1973). These include such basic manners as who sits where (on the floor, on a stool, on a chair), who eats when, with whom, and where, who does which chores. It is also within the domestic space that people *learn* these distinctions, and the behaviors that accompany them. One sees the interplay between the social and physical environments of the compound in that for newcomers, and for women especially, the compound and its yard become their locus of orientation to urban living (density, heterogeneity, complexity). The compound is a transitional living space, as it bridges both the very public of the street and the private of the bedroom. But it is also a



transition in that it provides a familiar space in which to adapt to unfamiliar roles.

Thus, the compound is the introduction to and teaching agent for the new-person-come-to-the-big-city. African compound dwellers have a social commitment to their shared space (1) through group ties to place/cultural memory, which is transposed to the city, and (2) through the learning process. Learning in space (Giddens, 1984) creates identification with that space. It is the woman, especially, who, thrown together with women (and men) to whom she is unrelated, must develop new forms of interaction. Social roles are inculcated, including adulthood (task, roles), gender (male/female social roles), urban living (among strangers), and neighboring (apart from friend or kin).

The Adabraka compound exhibits the two basic spatial organizing principles pointed out by Kent (1984): gender and activity function. The compound yard, as an extension of domestic space, is very much the domain of women. In this space, a cross between primary and secondary<sup>4</sup> territories in its combined impact on individual and group, each woman or family has delineated her/their area. Within that area, a variety of primary activities are carried out. These include especially household-related tasks—cooking, eating, doing the laundry, bathing children—which are gender based. Men use the open space, but in a far less formalized, less primary manner, and to a much lesser extent.

In a more general cultural sense, we know that there are sexual differences in attachment to territory. Women have a more intimate association with the home in terms of territorial feelings and attitudes. It is women whose social action is hooked into the home (Sebba & Churchman, 1983). And it is not just that the individual woman is involved with the home, but we may postulate a cultural memory, like Kuper's (1972) mental blueprint built upon history and group relations.

### THE GROUP

In the African context, a group-oriented theoretical focus is crucial. Cohesion is composed not just of psychological identification but also of a commitment to people and places (cf. Brown & Werner, 1985). Bourdieu's (1977) theory of the *habitus* complements structuration, explicitly bringing in the group as fundamental to the linkage between social structure and action. *Habitus* is an individual property, insofar as it is the incorporation of an individual's entire past experience in the social world. However, *habitus* is a socially structured phenomenon, "a logic derived from a common set of material conditions of existence to regulate the practice of a set of individuals in common response to those conditions" (Garnham & Williams, 1980, p. 213, cited in Buchman, 1989, p. 33). Therefore, *habitus* represents a group phenomenon.

The group is primary in African societies; its needs supercede those of the

<sup>4</sup>Altman (1975) distinguishes between primary and secondary territories. The former is exemplified by the home, psychologically central and enduring, and integral to the individual's sense of self; the latter, which is shared by the group, is integral to the sense of community.

individual. Group membership both gives an individual a sense of security and belonging and is requisite to a recognized niche in the social system. African group loyalty is based in kinship, and its locus is the group's land. Among traditional African societies, the group's land is considered sacred. It is the site of burials (the home of the ancestors) and the place where children's umbilical cords are buried.

For the Asante of south central Ghana, the spiritual dimension to land and the ownership of houses, in combination with a closely knit social system, result in the equivalence of land rights and loyalties with the social structure (Tippie, 1987).

In northern Ghana, emotional attachment to one's place of origin is common. As Prussin reminds us, indigenous peoples project kin ties onto the land by means of their religious beliefs. Among the Tallensi,

the building structure and the family unit form a single entity . . . The concept "yir" [house or joint family] is also related to the nature of Tallensi ancestor worship, in which the Earth is viewed as the source of fertility and productivity [and] each compound seems to rise out of the ground. (Prussin, 1969, pp. 59-61)

Among the Ga of Accra, the house is the most socially significant piece of property because it symbolizes the builder's continuing social identity. This is largely accomplished through social activities enacted there. "[P]hysical structures serve as visible reminders of fixed points in an otherwise amorphous cognatic descent system" (Kilson, 1974, p. 31). The community focal space is the compound.

### THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF ADABRAKA

Adabraka is a popular, low-rent neighborhood in Accra, the capital of Ghana. Because of its convenience to Central Accra, people of diverse origin had begun to settle in the community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Mr. Annan, a long-time neighborhood resident, recalls the Adabraka of his childhood:

Round about 1914, 1916, there were wolves after 6 o'clock round about this side. I actually heard them when my grandmother was staying in one of the wooden structures here. . . . Everybody [was] frightened. Gradually the road was repaired and people travelled on it to Nsawam, and the animals were frightened away. . . . At that time, there were not many people living here. The whole of this side was bush.<sup>5</sup>

The neighborhood was blocked out by the British as a *zongo* (stranger quarter) in 1908, to house migrants as well as the indigenous Ga. Some civil servants built houses there, many modeled on government sample dwellings. There has also been a growth of reasonable rental housing (fostered by the multistory concept).

<sup>5</sup>Interview, 9/29/71.

Adabraka is continuous with the urban system in space and time. Like the city as a whole, it is populated by diverse people. Personal repertoires of familiars are far more limited than in hometowns from which people hail. The city promotes a scattering of people, places, and things far more than does the hometown. The urban space sets limits, or nonlimits, on networks. With the fragmentation comes also the possibility of mobility. Anonymity allows for greater leeway in behaviors. Perhaps this is the clue to city life: a new living situation creates new lifestyles.

Adabraka provides an introduction to urban ways for newcomers, and a continuation of the process of urbanization to the longer-time residents. They learn what to expect both in the physical and the social spheres.

### THE URBAN COMPOUND

In the *Enumerator's Manual of the Ghana 1960 Population Census*, a house or compound is defined as

. . . a self-contained building unit. It is a structurally separate and independent place of abode. The essential features are separateness and independence. An enclosure may be considered separate if it is surrounded by walls, fences, etc., so that a person or a group of persons can isolate themselves from other persons in the community for the purpose of sleeping, preparing and taking their meals, or protecting themselves from the hazards of climate such as storms and the sun. (quoted in Caldwell, 1967, p. 63)

This definition was useful in the urban area, where streets and houses are marked. Street names, however, are not heeded and most people do not know the number address of their house.

### THE TRADITIONAL COMPOUND REDEFINED

In Accra, as in the rest of West Africa, the compound (of which the courtyard house is a version) is ubiquitous (Prussin, 1986). Kulturmänn (1963) advises that traditional African housing created a suitable environment for the development of community living, testifying to the definite place that the individual occupied within the group. In the typical Akan (southern Ghana) house, the individual rooms serve as bedrooms, are generally the size of an average bedroom, are rarely used during the day, and open onto an internal courtyard where daily interaction among residents occurs.

This courtyard is the living area of the house; it is there that arbitrations occur, cooking is done, children play, stories are told and family celebrations and funerals are held. (Faculty of Architecture, 1978, p. 458)

This traditional space has been transplanted to the city, generally to fulfill these same social functions, but often to accommodate nontraditional social arrangements, for the renters in different rooms are generally unrelated, their prove-

nance entirely different. Thus, what adds to its interest is its primacy in both traditional and nontraditional circumstances, and its adaptation to the latter.

Compounds differ in various ways—first of all, in terms of size and thus the size and number of buildings that they contain. Most do contain more than one building, and the more buildings, the more styles. For example, in the two-storied ones, each room opens onto a long hall. Long narrow bungalows are entered through a short hall, or antechamber, which has a door into the compound yard.

The age of buildings, their amenities (such as windows and ceiling height), and their maintenance are also at issue when one considers attachment to the home space and how that is used. In the case of compounds originally conceived for a family, the owner-builder put up only one building at first. Others followed suit, either with the expansion of the family through the marriage of adult children who moved into the new quarters, or with the rental plan.

There is some variation in the materials used to construct the houses. At first, small tin-roofed structures were built in Adabraka, but they were not wooden, they were made of sun-dried bricks. Wooden structures were not allowed, ostensibly for fear of fire, until the 1950s, and then wooden ones were erected next to those (the majority) made of concrete and brick.

The floor of the yard also varies. Some are concrete, others dirt and stones. This difference greatly affects the appearance of the property as well as the kind of maintenance the yard receives. Both dirt and concrete-floored compounds may have trees; this is a great help particularly in the concrete ones, as it cuts the heat reflected, or at least provides pleasant out-of-doors shelter from the sun. Dirt floors are less likely to be slept on during the extreme heat of the prerain season (March–April).

All of the compounds are demarcated, some more substantially than others. The majority have some kind of a wall, which rings the entirety, with the entrance through a kind of gateway. Small shops or kiosks may front the property from outside, even being built into the wall or in effect creating a piece of the wall. The wall's permeability affects the kinds of activities that take place in the yard, the degree of safety the residents feel. Some owners have built concrete walls, embedding shards of broken glass on top, to inhibit intruders from scaling the structure and entering unwanted. In other cases, it is only "the eyes" of the compound that inhibit strangers, thus late at night, when everyone is asleep, there is nothing to keep them out. And in such cases, residents are unlikely to put themselves at risk when the eyes of the compound are closed, for example, by sleeping out-of-doors.<sup>6</sup>

There is an absence or inadequacy of basic facilities such as toilets, bathrooms, and kitchens. Thus, residents must cross the compound yard to go to the toilet and to shower. In the worst-case scenario, they must leave the compound altogether to relieve themselves at the public toilets. Some compounds have a kitchen area—a lean-to or impromptu-looking shack—where

<sup>6</sup>This is an allusion to Jane Jacobs' discussion (1969) of American urban neighborhoods, where in years past, residents kept an eye out for one another, thereby maintaining safety.

women do not cook, because of the heat, but rather store their utensils and cook pots. Those lucky enough to own a refrigerator have it in the (sitting) room. If the compound has a water pipe, it does not empty into each room. Rather, there is one spigot in the yard, generally off to the side. This setup of amenities is centripetal, carrying the potential for greater involvement with others and modeling behavior for the young.

Most compounds do contain more than one building. In a multistory house, an individual or even an entire family lives in one room. In her survey of Accra, Acquah (1958) observes that 62% of the households surveyed had only one room. My survey of 86 compounds in Adabraka yielded the following results on the average number of people per room in different types of housing: 3.4 for single-room arrangements, 3.3 for 1.5 rooms, 2.3 for 3 rooms, 1.7 for 4 rooms, and 1.6 for 6-room accommodations (Pellow, 1977). Calculating who is actually a resident and who an occasional visitor is not always simple; in his Adabraka research, Sanjek (1982) calculated that 37 people slept in one building in the course of 68 days. Of them, 26 were counted as residents, the others as visitors. This issue is important to our concerns here, because the greater the density within the room, the greater the pressure on the compound yard.

Indeed, rooms are used primarily for sleeping. This is in part due to the crowded conditions: even in the chamber-hall arrangement, the hall, that is, the sitting area, is only about 4' × 10'. Outside it is airier and roomy, making it a more pleasant place to spend time.

While there are houses in Adabraka that were built to accommodate immediate family only, most have come to incorporate strangers as well. Since the late 1940s, Adabraka's dominant housing pattern, as in much of urban Ghana, "has been the privately owned multihousehold building, containing from four to forty rooms, most of them rented to tenants" (Sanjek, 1982, p. 59). The fact that one is a tenant in no way affects permanence of residence. It simply refers to one's relationship to the builder-owner.

The large houses have perpetuated the appearance of a communal life, as many Ghanaians live in large town houses with many rooms. Thus, people in Adabraka do not find themselves in small lonely quarters—although they do occupy small rooms within a larger whole, and they may be lonely in the midst of strangers.

#### ADABRAKA'S COMPOUND LIVING

While the neighborhood of Adabraka is continuous with the urban system in space and time, it is also within the tradition of Gutkind and Southall's (1957) "urban village"—"more urbanized than the ordinary rural village, but still not strictly a 'town'" (p. 100). Indeed, as in a village, one does not find a great deal of residential mobility here.

When people come into the city, they must find a place to live, one that does not involve a long-term commitment. In contrast to the traditional way of

life, the city situation may be a transient one (although in Adabraka, a highly valued neighborhood, residents do stay put); great investment need not be put into either one's living space or into the people with whom one interacts. Not only might a person find herself in a new home, away from family, in a strange city, but also in a living situation over which she has little control. She lives wherever a room is available.

In a tenanting situation, individuals (who carry a mental blueprint of the traditional, i.e., kin-based, compound) must alter behavior to cope with distance, in physical and social terms, as it is not the norm for them to share common background features. Looking at a sample of compounds, one finds varieties of ethnic admixture. Most residents, however, are members of three southern Ghanaian groups: Ga, indigenous to Accra; Akan, particularly Kwahu; and Ewe.<sup>7</sup> If, as a migrant, one has moved from living among kin—Keller (1968) creates an equivalence in traditional villages between kin, neighbor, and friend—the new situation presents a new challenge.

The newcomer may narrow down the choice to a particular section, such as Adabraka, or a compound within Adabraka, because kin or friends are already resident there. Certainly, alongside the Ga family compounds, whose residents are exclusively Ga if not of that family,<sup>8</sup> many tenants come to a particular house because a member of one's family—sister, brother, cousin—is already there. Thus, one finds tenanted compounds that may be populated primarily by one family or ethnic/hometown group, complemented by rooms of other social types of people. For example, one of the interviewees was Kwahu; she moved from Obo-Kwahu because she had secretarial training and could not find a job in her town. She moved to Accra for work, to the particular house because her elder sister was there. Subsequently, her mother's husband died, so she moved as well. There are also other Kwahu residents. Yet, in this same compound there are also Ewe, Adangbe, and Krobo people. And the owner, an absentee landlady, is a Nigerian.

If one is not moving in with family (and with family the question of extra room does not arise—there is always room, even if all room is currently occupied), renting rooms is through informal networks: someone hears of something, or someone in a house moves out and a friend of someone else is told and moves in, or someone merely walks up and down the street, knocking on doors and inquiring after vacancies.

Some ethnic groups tend to cluster, both within compounds and within sections of the neighborhood, in part out of personal preference, in part due to negative stereotyping from without. Many Hausa and other "northerners"<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Sanjek's (1982) findings in another part of Adabraka are similar: while 22 ethnic identities were represented in 11 buildings, only the Kwahu, Ga, and Ewe amounted to more than 6% of the population.

<sup>8</sup>It is traditional among the Ga for women to live among women to whom they are matrilineally related through the builder, and for men to live among their patrilineal kinsmen. Thus, it is not at all uncommon for husbands and wives to live separately (Kilson, 1974).

<sup>9</sup>Accra's "northern" community is bounded generally by a regional identity, and more specifically by language (Hausa), cultural orientation (Islam, food, clothing), and education

live near the Adabraka Market mosque, making for convenience of prayer but also building up their own enclave. But as seen earlier, they also live among others. Moreover, they have no more claim to a section or compound (if tenants) than anyone else. Directly opposite the mosque are three compounds. One is composed of Ewe, Hausa, and Buzanga; one is an Adangbe family house with Akan, Ewe, and Ga tenants; and the third is a Ga family house. The Ewe, feared and avoided for their supposed "bad magic" and thievery, also speak a language that many otherwise polylingual Africans find difficult and do not know. A clannish group, they tend to cluster. Yet, as noted, they, too, live in mixed compounds.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COMPOUND SPACE

The compound yard—what in other circumstances is the courtyard—is the space that carries particular meaning for the compound dwellers. People *feel* attached or *are* attached to the compound yard because of what it offers, because of the actions that are a part of its system.

The significance, even in the tenanted situation, is the conceptual division of the yard space into public, semipublic, and private domains, permitting usages appropriate to each. The inhabitants have defined it to fit their personal and individual needs, while also allowing it to be a (semi-) public space to be used by everyone resident there. And it carries interest because if we think of attachment in terms of usage, of spatial orientation, it is to this space, rather than the indoor private quarters, that the Adabraka people are attached. The distinction that Altman (1975) makes between primary and secondary territories may be less useful: the individual, the primary group (family), and the secondary group (unrelated residents) all use this same physical space, but at different times, in different ways, for different reasons, with differing effects.

Compound dwellers have a fundamental attachment to this shared space for a variety of reasons. For one thing, Accra sits on the Atlantic Coast, about 6 degrees north of the Equator, in the belt of tropical and equatorial climates. Temperatures are high, varying little from year to year, and Accra also experiences the high coastal humidity which reaches 95–100% during the night and early morning. Moreover, much of the housing is minimally sufficient, if not substandard. Even those that are well built seem to have been constructed without taking the climate into account, from the direction of siting, to the cement walls that hold in the heat, the small windows, and lack of cross-ventilation. This makes outdoor living sensible.

Moreover, the courtyard tradition underlines what it is that people do with the space—and which makes attachment to this space so important, even if out-of-awareness. It is here that activities come together. They define the

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(Koranic), which distinguish them from the "southern," more outward-looking Christian Ghanaians (Peil, 1979).

space. The compound yard is what Hall (1969) calls fixed-feature space, a basic way of organizing activities. "Some aspects of fixed-feature space are not visible until one observes human behavior, . . . The invisible boundary which separates one yard from another in suburbia is . . . a fixed-feature of American culture or at least some of its subcultures" (p. 106). The activities that compound residents engage in carry social meanings, be they domestic and hence somewhat private or occupational and thus more a part of the public domain. They take place in a variety of settings, for even though the same space is utilized, it varies over time as it is behaviorally redefined. The compound yard, in other words, may be broken down into activity areas (Kent, 1984), spaces that are bounded either conceptually or physically and associated with groups of people and their patterns of behavior.

The change in context, and of attachment to the yard through the particular activity change, may be accomplished through semifixed features (Hall, 1969)—elements that provide clues to the change in activity, that are needed for the new activity to take place.

#### CUES AND MEDIUM

Physical spatial qualities are used to indicate the kind of social interaction to be expected in the space, which in turn results in role learning. These qualities include position and distance and symbolic decoration, all of which define territory.

#### *Activities Contained*

The compound yard, a large, central living space, substitutes for indoor living space. It incorporates many activity areas and serves any number of functions. The amount and nature of interaction that it contains vary with the relatedness and ethnicity of the residents, and with the physical properties and layout. It is a general socializing space, enclosed by the buildings and/or a wall. Since compound apartments do not include kitchens, the yard is each woman's kitchen; each, however, occupies her own conceptually delineated spot—physical boundaries do not exist. Some compounds have either a lean-to or a proper building subdivided into a few rooms, each of which functions as a kitchen and is usually shared. These are used for storing utensils rather than cooking, because of the heat. The stove is similar to a hibachi and fueled with coal.

The sun begins to set a bit past 6 o'clock, with little seasonal variation. Some but not all compounds have a yard light. Smoldering coals used in cooking give off enough light for outside eating and chatting. Rarely do residents spend time in one another's rooms, unless kin live there or it is a family house; private corners in the yard are easily located.

For the woman selling prepared food, some area in the yard almost certainly serves as her kitchen and very often as her take-out shop as well. Every



block or two, for example, there is at least one *kenkey* seller.<sup>10</sup> She keeps her occupational paraphernalia—the large black cauldron and the soaking corn—in the yard. Most *kenkey* sellers do not bother to go out into the street to sell; their residence cum shop is known, and patrons come to them there to make purchases.

The yard is also a playground for children, who, in any case, find themselves perfectly at home wandering in and out of people's rooms. Children, unlike adults, seem to feel no restrictions—social, psychological, or territorial. They often disregard boundaries and trespass where adults would not dare. They are fed on demand, and a hungry child can always get something to eat from someone if his own mother is otherwise engaged or has nothing quick on hand to give him.

With so many of the house's facilities centralized for all to use, visual involvement, at least, is great. Living here is with people, and privacy is relative. The omnipresent loud radio provides an auditory barrier, muffling sounds while also entertaining. Other than the radio, a cotton curtain in every doorway is the only impediment to intrusion—clearly only visual, not auditory; when an occupant is in the vicinity, the door is at least unlatched if not open altogether.

In other words, the private and the public are melded, while each is re-defined. The compound is the domain of the residents; each has her own demarcated space inside. It is technically off-limits to nonresidents—which is what makes it a semipublic rather than a public space. Yet, nonresidents patronize businesses in the compound. Thus the yard is both and neither public and private.

### *Enculturation Within*

In their discussion of privacy, Laufer, Proshansky, and Wolfe (1976) include the socializing experience of the individual. "Place identity is an aspect of self-identity; i.e. there are experiences in and with *places* that contribute to the development of a sense of self" (p. 212). This is true for the learning of roles and behaviors in general (Sebba & Churchman, 1983), is linked to the group, and links social structure and place.

I have portrayed Adabraka as an urban village, where Western lifeways and values are overshadowed by common folk traditions. The urban compound, also already noted, is an adaptation of the traditional family house. It is particularly women for whom the urban compound is an enculturating space. Outside of her place of work (which is often *in* the compound), this is where the woman spends most of her time. It is women primarily who have delineated private space in the visually open arena of the yard. The compound's heterogeneity, the feature that distinguishes it from its rural predecessor, en-

<sup>10</sup>*Kenkey* is the Ga staple, which everyone in Accra—Ga or otherwise—eats. It is made from fermented corn.

courages the development of new forms of interaction and the accompanying identities—and this takes place within the context of the compound.

The compound becomes the point of orientation. Although the content of the woman's roles is still domestic, they are not carried out in the family milieu. The woman is eased into the transition to city life as she learns to deal with strangers in the role of urban neighbor.<sup>11</sup>

Neighboring is socially structured like any other social activity and is adapted to the type of setting.

If as in some simple villages, neighbors are also clan and blood relations, then the concept of neighbor cannot arise. It arises precisely because the neighbor is the proximate stranger, defending interests that are partly his alone and partly those he shares with other neighbors. . . . In most tribal and peasant villages this presents no real problem, for though the neighbor may be considered a stranger in the sense of not being a blood or affinal relative, he is, nonetheless, a familial figure whose antecedents are as well known as his current habits. In cities, however, the neighbor may actually be a total stranger, one whose ancestors and habits are unknown and whose true personality must be pieced together from fragments revealed only in the course of time. (Keller, 1968, p. 22)

Since compound life is no longer congruent with the extended family, dependencies are different. In Accra, as in any city, a neighbor need not be a friend or a relative; the first is a chosen role, the second prescribed. They also differ because "physical distance does not destroy these relationships whereas a neighbor, by definition, ceases to exist as a neighbor once spatial distance intervenes" (Keller, 1968, p. 24). If two neighbors become good friends, the friendship usurps the neighbor relationship.

In Adabraka, when neighbors do not share common kinship or ethnicity, they are barely acquainted. The heterogeneity and remoteness of such compound coresidents are reflective of urban relationships in general, and for many migrants are in fact an introduction to this aspect of the urban milieu. In compounds inhabited by one family with a few stray tenants, the latter are usually known by name (family name). In compounds that began as a family house and expanded into family and tenant housing, and in those inhabited exclusively by tenants, it is not unusual for neighbors to only recognize one another. Often as not, compound-mates come into contact with each other only if there is a definite reason to do so.

Some interaction even among "strangers" does occur. One component of compound interaction is voluntary. Most of the women claim to know everyone in the compound for purposes of greeting. Although there may be an occasional outing to the movies, socializing tends to be confined to the compound yard. It usually takes place for short periods of time before bed or on Sunday when no one goes off to work, and in passing during the day. While water is not distributed to individual rooms, electricity is. Individuals own entertainment appliances that run on electricity, but these are not isolating. Rather, they may also function centripetally, for while unrelated people tend

<sup>11</sup>Much of the following comes from Pellow, 1977.

not to socialize in one another's rooms, the possession of a television or VCR alters behavior—it benefits one's reputation to allow neighbors to watch. It is also part of the communal ethic.

Someone in every compound has a Ludo board (a game similar to Parchesi), and Ludo is played in every compound when people have free time. Playing and watching promote interaction.

Contact among women is often promoted by similarities in tasks, such as cooking and marketing. Since most women cook outdoors, and eating schedules generally coincide, they often converse during these activities. But they are also adept at tuning each other out: with such crowded conditions and no physical partitions, auditory screening is useful. And unless kin, or close friends, they rarely cook ensemble. One woman reported becoming best friends with her immediate neighbor. Both of them live with spouse and children in chamber-hall arrangements. They enjoyed sitting together in the afternoon and cooking together in the yard. Then one day, the husband of one of the women forbade it, ostensibly because he viewed her behavior as a violation of her role.

The newcomer, unused to city ways, unsure of which market carries the best produce and has the lowest prices, learns some of the ropes from "old-timer" neighbors. Sometimes she may market with a neighbor, although I got a sense that marketing, if done with another person, is done with a friend. She also learns indirectly about the heterogeneity of the city—the variety of ethnic groups, of hometown areas, of languages spoken and occupations plied—as it is so often represented just outside of her own door. She must adjust to seeing strangers, to seeing them not necessarily as friends but at least not as enemies, and to learn how to deal with them.

A second component of neighborliness is the working relationships among residents that ensure the daily function of the compound as a whole. Maintenance of facilities is the responsibility of the female inhabitants, whether stranger or kin. Men learn to deal with strangers in the public domain beyond the compound walls—at their places of work. Women learn to deal with strangers through their domestic roles, perpetuating a traditional theme. Floors, public and private, are always carefully swept. Every morning, each woman (or a child or female visitor) sweeps up her family's quarters and their corner of the compound. When a room is off a hallway, each occupant's area of the hallway is individually swept up.

These individually maintained semipublic spaces, outside or on balconies, are swept as many times a day as meals are prepared. A woman drops refuse on the ground as she cooks, afterwards sweeping up the parings as well as the trail of ashes and dead charcoal left by the coalpot. If there is a common kitchen, each woman cooks individually and takes care of her own area. Conflicts do not seem to arise over refusals by one person to clean a spot that she has not used, nor do the women appear to be particularly concerned about distributing the tasks equally.

Toilet and shower facilities are shared in every compound. There is at least one of each, and most compounds that are not family houses have one set per

housing structure in the compound. Cleaning them again follows sexual lines, generally then following a system of rotation, sometimes following seniority and ownership.

While the compound yard is a semipublic space relative to residents' rooms, in line with Rosaldo's heuristic model (1973), it is a private space relative to the world beyond the compound walls. It is also a domestic space—most of the activities carried out in the yard are household related. And even the occupational activities represent a commercialization of women's domestic tasks—cooking, baking, sewing.

Thus, life in the compound yard communicates to women directly and men indirectly what the division of labor is all about. It perpetuates the model of women carrying domestic responsibilities. It also teaches children as they watch or are asked to help. It is an arena of informal socialization regarding gender roles, household and occupational responsibilities, and social and physical boundaries between occupants of rooms. Children often apprentice to an adult female—mother, mother's sister, elder sister—in the latter's work. The prepared-food seller—whether of rice and beans, cake, *kenkey*—carries out her occupational tasks in the yard, and she teaches her young helpers in the yard.

## COMPOUND ORDER

On the sociospatial continuum of public to private, the compound represents a transitional zone. Unlike the courtyard house, the graduated zones are not absolutely delineated; all are present, even in the same physical space, their definition varying in time.

These urban dwellers redefine the open compound space as private. They create their own bubbles, ignore other people, and others agree to ignore them. They manufacture this "public privacy" to carry out activities that their indoor space will not accommodate easily. The idea of public privacy has in the past been applied to intimate activities: to explain Indians defecating in public (Naipaul, 1965), Pacific Island Mंगाians engaging in sex in a room filled with kin (Brain, 1979), mainland Chinese necking in city parks (Pellow, n.d.). In each of these cases, though the action might occur in a public setting, it is as though it were in private. Of course, it is a way of defining what is public, of how far one can extend his space bubble. Moreover, privacy is interactional, presupposing the existence of others.

[P]rivacy is a boundary control process. . . . As a self–other boundary control process, privacy is viewed as involving a network of behavioral mechanisms that people use to achieve desired levels of social interaction [such as] verbal and paraverbal behaviors . . . and culturally defined styles of responding. (Altman, 1977, p. 67)

The Adabraka residents' easygoing sharing of the compound's space is enabled by a morality of user behavior. The residents share common values. This includes the principle of public privacy, each allowing the others to carry out daily activities in the open space but as though they were not visible. This is not to say that interactions do not occur; I have already enumerated various bases for exchanges in the yard. But the choice to interact versus not, when the person is in full view, is tied to the particular activity. For example, if a Muslim lives there, she can comfortably observe the daily requirements for prayer—kneeling on a prayer rug in the yard, thereby creating her own (sacred) space, which others do not violate.

Moreover, we do not see here individuals pursuing their own best interest at the expense of others in the context of a society that believes in the freedom of the "commons." In studies of public space in the United States, a debate rages over whether American life has become more privatized (Brill, 1989; Francis, 1989). In the African compound, this is a moot issue. Residents can and do share space, social or physical, without the occurrence of what Hardin (1976) has called "the tragedy of the commons": the inability of cattle-raisers to continue sharing the common grazing ground, as "each man is locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit—in a world that is limited. . . . Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all" (pp. 382–383).

The need for ordered relations in the Adabraka compound recalls Sennett's (1977) discussion of the need to create boundaries, barriers, or mutual distance, so that people can be sociable without being destructive. The territory of each family is distinct, as marked by a piece of furniture, through use, by keeping it up, and by custom. Activity areas *within* families do overlap physically but are separated in time. For example, cooking and eating and casual socializing and playing Ludo may all take place in front of one person's doorway or "territory" in the yard.

The "tragedy" that Hardin (1976) depicts does not afflict the compound, because these residents all hail from cultures that reward group-oriented behavior, where the place of the individual is hooked into communal interests. In the tenanted compound, the tenants are not "free," and the compound does not represent private property. Accra and its compounds are overpopulated, yet regulated spatially: people do not take over the yard in its entirety. There are invisible divisions, and they are respected.

Sociospatial order further helps to generate a relationship between people and the compound (attachment to the place) as it reinforces, and is reinforced by, person–place linkages. As we have been discussing them in this section, we see the tie of the resident to the compound by way of a mini-social system, cued in part by physical reminders but more by conceptual ones. And there are also residence–occupation linkages, as embodied by the unity of compound–workplace for many of those who are self-employed. The Adabraka tenants share a moral code regarding shared space and social arrangements within the yard. These produce a commitment to place, in terms of use and maintenance, as well as a shared responsibility.

## ANTHROPOLOGY AND COMPOUND ATTACHMENT

For as long as anthropology has formalized the art of writing ethnographies have practitioners in the discipline found it important to anchor their studies of social systems in physical space. What might the compound yard, this enclosed transitional space, mean in anthropology? First of all, it draws attention to the relationship between internal and external space. The compound yard is an unsheltered space, what we would generally think of as different from, contrary to, the indoors. And yet, it is used for activities that Westerners associate with enclosed, demarcated areas—areas that are cut off visually or aurally from those who are not participants in the activity at hand. Oliver (1987) has observed that there are spillover uses for inside spaces into external space. A dwelling is a constituent part of its environment, “sometimes territorially determined by walls, hedges or thickets, sometimes by the sweeping or maintenance of adjacent space considered by the occupants to be part of its domain, or simply acknowledged by custom” (Oliver, 1987, p. 141). If we look at the dynamic between internal and external spaces in the context of use, it indicates “much more than the functions to which the spaces are put” (p. 141).

There is, moreover, a link between the exterior and the interior, between the space beyond the compound walls and the space within, between the space within the compound and that within each dwelling contained. The transitional nature of the compound, as a public, semipublic, and private arena, translates into the exterior–interior linkage. Oliver (1987) asserts “how societies regard their relationship to external space is often a measure of the importance that they place on privacy” (p. 141). The compound folk are able to carve out private corners, without actually being out of sight or hearing, through the means of public privacy.

Certainly feminist anthropological theory has hammered at the relationship between the public and the private, the conditions for the separation and/or fusing of the two (Caplan & Bujra, 1979; Moore, 1989; Rosaldo, 1973). That the compound is very much associated with women (this is particularly true among wealthy practicing Muslims; cf. Callaway, 1987; Pellow, 1991; Pittin, 1983) and provides an orientation for them to the city and to the new relationships in this social system, is crucial.

The compound yard is an arena for distribution and reception; in both its social and physical composition, it is generated by culture (see the next section) for culture—to enable roles and relationships, the carrying out of necessary daily functions, to represent and allow for the enactment of cultural rules. There are meanings attached to its nooks and crannies, to the way it is organized, that are generated and activated as people carry out their daily lives. As a context within which activities go on, where over time cues are built into the environment, the compound yard is an instrument of socialization. It creates a sense of orientation, the spatial cuing the social, the social then feeding back into the spatial.

## OF INTEREST TO ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNERS

The courtyard (compound) house should be conceptually interesting to environmental planners if for no other reason than its widespread existence, over historical time and geographical space. It was present in Mesopotamia in the seventh millennium; in the Chaldean city of Ur, dating back to 2000 BC; and in Kahun, Egypt, 5,000 years ago (Oliver, 1987; Schwerdtfeger, 1982). While often associated with Islam and Arab culture, in fact, the origin and development of the courtyard house predate Islam in Arabia and predate the introduction of Islam in Nigeria and Morocco (Schwerdtfeger, 1982).

The courtyard house in essence consists of rooms on three or all four sides of an open atrium. According to Rapoport (1969), this form fulfills the person's need of getting away "while still in the familiar territory of the family or clan group—and the separation of domains achieves that. In cultures with no overall hierarchy this type of development does not take place" (p. 82). Moreover, in hot countries, it performs a climatically important role: while the midday sun may reach the courtyard floor, thick walls prevent too much heating, and cool air from the surrounding rooms is drawn into the atrium (Oliver, 1987).

Variations on its ancient plan are present as the atrium house as far east as India in cities developed under Moghul influence (such as Haridwar, Jaipur, and Ahmedabad), in the Mediterranean in Greece and Rome, in Hispanic (Mediterranean) Latin America (Oliver, 1987; Rapoport, 1969), and in China (Boyd, 1962; Knapp, 1989).

In Africa, the common version is the compound (with its enclosed yard). Most contain round dwellings, which when conjoined create the compound (northern Ghanaian villages of Dagomba, Konkomba, and Tallensi; Prussin, 1969). Among the Ashanti (Ghana), and among Muslims or those influenced by Islam, in sub-Saharan Africa as in North Africa and the Middle East, the geometrization of buildings and courtyards is common (Prussin, 1986).

The transitional nature of the courtyard is exemplified among the Lela, in Burkina Faso (Bourdier & Minh-ha, 1985), and in other Muslim cultures. Among the Lela in Djenne, Mali, open interior space is encircled by living units and provides a link between the exterior of the compound and the interior living area of the family. Passing through the front vestibule one transits from the exterior, public space to the interior, private household space (Prussin, 1986).

As in the Adabraka compounds, the courtyard or compound is an umbrella activity area among many peoples, the locus of domestic activities (Bourdier & Minh-ha, 1985; Guidoni, 1978; Prussin, 1986).

Another social structural element well accommodated by and reflected in the courtyard house—compound is the gendering of space: the association of men and women with different areas, as a function of their social roles. "Gender shapes bodies as they shape space and are in turn shaped by its arrangements. And the body in action, with its movements and rhythms, its gestures and cadences, shapes the home" (Illich, 1982, pp. 118–119).

At its less extreme, it is the association, within the same space, of the two genders with different activities; it is the use of different implements and, as in the Mongolian tent, the appropriate placing of them according to gender (Humphrey, 1974); it is the association of women with the hearth, which itself traditionally defines the communal outdoor living space, as among the !Kung (Marshall, 1973).

At its most extreme, we see gendering in societies that demand segregation of the sexes. Among wealthy (pious) Muslims, houses do quite literally become "containers of women." In traditional Muslim compounds, the gradation of spaces from public to private is clearly understood. It includes a forecourt where men congregate, and a series of transitional spaces until one reaches the women's quarters, well out of sight of all unrelated males.

In all Fulani (Northern Nigeria and Niger) groups, there are always some women who are restricted to the courtyard. For among the Fulani, as among other Muslims in West Africa, to be sequestered is a sign of chic—a sign of one's husband's wealth. As Kintz (1989) so accurately notes, "segregation is certainly not more difficult to live with than mixing of the sexes . . . but it is more complicated to organize, especially in space" (p. 13). "Double channels of circulation" must be provided, so that women can remain invisible; thus, the men's area, in front, is separated from the women's courtyard. While the fence that separates the male from the female domain does not absolutely visually cut off those on either side, it is "a materialization of (among other things) distinct social and intellectual behaviours and of modes of expression which are also inverted" (Kintz, 1989, p. 14).

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF RESEARCH—DESIGN AND POLICY

In this chapter, I have offered a sociological framework toward understanding how people become attached and experience attachment to their living space. My specific focus has been on the compound in a neighborhood of the West African city of Accra, Ghana. This kind of sociospatial system is a carryover from the kin-based rural situation. It continues to generate a sense of place identity through the activities that people engage in in this space. This sociospatial system is a cultural creation that generates place attachment through social action.

The urban African compound is created and peopled by individuals who hail from collectivistic cultures. They bring with them templates of a communal lifestyle, which they have applied to their urban living situation. If planners are to understand compound attachment, or any other element that links users with a space, they must take note of the primal sensibilities that tie people to this particular space, of the symbolic representation embodied, of the relationship between place and cultural memory.

The courtyard form is found in areas that are quite distinct in climate, as well as cultural tradition. It has been employed in both crowded and hierarchic



cultures. Research and design must take note of the courtyard's relationship to social structure: what is it about this built form that translates so well into very dissimilar traditions? The case from Adabraka is not unique, in either urban or rural terms. Is there not, therefore, a lesson to be learned in planning new housing developments?

The Yoruba, from Lagos, the capital of Nigeria, typically built their houses either around a central hall or with a corridor leading to a backyard; the hall or yard would be the common place for working, cooking, sitting, storage, and so on. A relocation plan, which originated among well-meaning but culturally ignorant British planners in the 1950s, was a disaster: while the housing was more spacious and had much better facilities (toilets and running water), it did not fit the traditional communal paradigm, and people were unhappy living in bungalows designed for nuclear families; moreover, social networks were badly disrupted (Marris, 1961).

The Third World context introduces the issue of variability in how people relate to their environment, what it means to them, what they do in it. At issue is how to create attachment when it is the group, not the individual, that is fundamental. This means that we must consider what "otherness" means, at least in terms of values germane to the built environment, and how we might design for the "other," and have that design work. If group values supercede those of the individual, then place attachment must occur at different levels of scale. Similarly, privacy would exist at different levels, for the family or household, rather than the individual member.

Transitional spaces carry a different salience in different cultures, depending upon issues of age, religion, gender, class, and so on. To design housing that incorporates gradations from public to private, one must understand what each of these gradations means, and for whom. Given the popularity of the courtyard house, work on this built form could be taken further. For example, in designing courtyards or compounds cross-culturally, it is essential to know which groupings underlie the roles of those who use the space only tangentially, yet, who matter—that is, what sets of dynamics determine users' roles?

Like other Third World societies, Accra is undergoing rapid cultural change. Thus, in line with Duncan's (1985) thesis, it is important to examine how the move toward individualism will affect the way in which Accra's compound dwellers relate to one another and to the domestic space that they share. As he notes, social organization is crystallized in the built environment, which in turn feeds back into a legitimization of the social order. In urban African compounds, how will a move from collectivism to individualism affect use of and experience of the communal space? Will conceptually encoded demarcations of compound space be more visibly denoted? Will there be a move away from tenanted compound living? If so, how will people be accommodated in crowded urban areas? Is the nuclear family apartment the answer? If so, it is essential to understand how a transition can be made that matches social with spatial understandings.

Research and design, whether in the Third World or the First, on the courtyard or the storied apartment complex, on attachment or satisfaction,

must take account of social action as integral to the spatial system and vice versa.

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# Transcendence of Place

THE ROLE OF *LA PLACETA* IN VALENCIA'S *LAS FALLAS*

DENISE L. LAWRENCE

## INTRODUCTION

*Las Fallas* is a carnivalesque rite of mammoth proportions celebrated each year in neighborhood streets and plazas in the city of Valencia, Spain.<sup>1</sup> The event's central attraction is the 350 "fallas" erected by neighborhoods throughout the city; each falla is indelibly identified with the *placeta* ("small square" in Valenciano) and sponsoring neighborhood, which all share the same name. The fallas are garishly painted, sculpted, papier-mâché figures of massive scale and proportion that give expression to popular themes of satirical dissent. Under the auspices of city government, artists and neighborhood commissions collaborate to create grotesque images that ridicule and parody contemporary values, and critically comment on local, national, and international issues.

Symbolically, *Las Fallas* expresses contemporary Valencian urban and regional identity and serves as a popular metaphor for local pride in a distinct history, language, and culture.<sup>2</sup> It also signifies the historical claims of a liberal

<sup>1</sup>Field and archival research that provided the data for this study was conducted in Valencia for 3 months during the summer of 1985. The research for this chapter was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and a Tinker Foundation Research Grant from the University of New Mexico, Latin American Institute. The support of these two institutions is gratefully acknowledged.

<sup>2</sup>Valenciano is a vernacular language distinct from Castilian Spanish, and although most Valencians are fluent in Castilian, many are bilingual and prefer to speak the traditional language at home and among friends. Although Valenciano is often considered a dialect of

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democracy to establish itself in a public arena and the collective resistance against authority imposed by any source deemed non-Valencian. While Valencian identity is secured and developed in neighborhood streets and plazas, ritual enactment of this cultural metaphor is used by participants to appropriate public places for transcending the experience of locality and achieving a sense of unity of their contemporary selves with their collective past. The *placeta* figures as a key element in this celebration, not as a particularly meaningful place in and of itself, but as the vehicle and essential ingredient for achieving transcendence.

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The concept of place attachment provides an important framework for exploring myriad ways in which people form meaningful relations with places. It and related concepts of space appropriation and identity refer to the notion that "people invest places with meaning and significance and act in ways that reflect their bonding and linkage with places" (Werner, Altman, & Oxley, 1985, p. 5). Identity is treated as a specific kind of meaning people associate with place, while the concept of appropriation emphasizes the transformation of the individual in the process of taking control over the physical environment. These transactionalist approaches to place attachment focus principally on the individual level of analysis and emphasize a kind of unitary conceptualization of people's bonding with the environment (Werner, Altman, & Oxley, 1985).

The place attachment framework provides a useful model for organizing and synthesizing elements of an interactive process, but suggests a number of questions for the examination of collective processes in spatial relations. Key phrases in the literature such as "invest . . . meaning" and "attach significance" indicate that meaning is somehow applied onto or into space making it "place"; space is the object to which significance is attached. Yet, the source of the meaning created in or resulting from the bonding or linkage is obscure, as is the nature of the mechanism by which a meaningful linkage is accomplished. Is the meaning created from the interaction of certain behaviors with space, and if so which ones? Or is meaning applied from some other source? Place attachment seems to suggest that as a result of the attribution of meaning onto place, places retain and emanate meaning thereafter, and they may take on a mnemonic role. A strongly evocative place may suggest nostalgia, sentimentality, or inspiration as a result of its infused meaning. It is not clear, however, that all meaningful places can be considered meaningful in the same way; there may be variation in quality and intensity of meaning associated with spaces.

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Catalan, the traditional language of the northern province of Cataluña, Valencians feel differently. They consider the inclusion an insult to their own cultural heritage and insist that Valenciano is older and significantly different from Catalan. All this is to say that regional enthusiasts and zealots wish to consider their kingdom of Valencia older and therefore more important than their northern neighbors.

Because of the nature of ritual, place attachment concepts pose a number of challenging questions for the exploration of ritual-spatial relations. One inherent problem is the ephemeral quality of ritual interactions. In part because rituals are periodic and special, set apart from everyday routines and ordinary behavior, their contribution to the meaning of place is difficult to observe. In addition, ritual depends on the abstract and intangible qualities of symbolic constructs for its meaning and efficacy. This momentary but highly charged form of behavior affects and is affected by the meaning that extends well beyond the event itself. Although ritual activity may temporarily mark space, the nature of its immediate and enduring contributions to meaning is unclear. While ritual-spatial relations may not be completely handled by current concepts of place attachment, a growing literature on ritual-spatial relations in nonliterate societies offers some alternative approaches.

#### RITUAL-SPATIAL RELATIONS: NONLITERATE FOLK

Research on ritual-place relations in nonliterate or "traditional" societies shares the view that rituals depend for their efficacy on existing symbolic constructs that organize meaning through classificatory schemes. Classification systems linking natural, social, and supernatural worlds provide the means and rationale by which nonliterate peoples differentiate features—sacred and profane—of their environment. As in the concept of place attachment, many of these views tend to regard spatial phenomena as passive recipients of signification. Rapoport (1977) argues that among Australian aborigines "The mythical landscape is superimposed over the physical landscape" (p. 44) to identify sacred clan sites that are used to periodically reenact ancestral events in ritual. Others suggest that spatial classification schemes act as templates by which ritual reaffirms society's commitment to the social structure and the cosmos. Eliade (1959) claims, "By occupying it [a territory] and, above all, settling in it, man symbolically transforms it into a cosmos through a ritual repetition of the cosmogony" (p. 31). Through the ritual expression of classificatory schemes, space can be transformed (Saile, 1985) and the stability and order of the cosmic world and society maintained (Prussin, 1989).

An alternative view suggests that the physical environment, modified by ritual activity, can play an active role in the efficacy of the ritual process. According to Turner, spatial features employed as ritual symbols may be invested with meaning, used to temporally mark the conduct of ritual activity, and manipulated to interact with other ritual symbols. The material dimensions of ritual symbols condense and unify the sensory with the ideological poles of meaning, and achieve efficacy in the liminal state (Turner, 1967). Liminality is a critical transition in which the most potent symbols in their most powerful arrangements are brought together to create an intense ritual state in which participants collectively experience a heightened sensation of communion. Turner (1969) calls "communitas." Spatial elements contribute to the transcendent qualities of the ritual process and become charged themselves because their relations with other ritual symbols are activated during the rites.

Spatial symbols need not dominate the ritual process, nor do they necessarily retain symbolic meaning after the event is completed, but they must interact with other symbols for significance.

In a different view of ritual-spatial relations, Bourdieu (1977) argues that the physical environment is not an object upon which the subjective mind operates. Rather, what he calls "the world of objects" is produced through actions applying symbolic and metaphorical schemes. Mental constructs invest actions (but not the material objects) with objective meaning; the world of objects they produce, in turn, sets the conditions for reproducing the mental structures that created them in the first place. Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, loosely translated as a "system of dispositions," accounts for this process as "a generative principle of regulated improvisations, [that] produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities imminent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle" (1977, p. 78).

Bourdieu's account of ritual-spatial relations concerns the house, the locus of the *habitus* that produces gender relations in Kabyle society. The house is a material world produced by instrumental and expressive practices that apply mental structures. Bourdieu argues that the *habitus* is tied to position in the social structure and "is the product of the work of inculcation and appropriation necessary in order for those products of collective history, the objective structures to succeed in reproducing themselves . . ." (1977, p. 85). Bourdieu's contribution to understanding ritual-spatial relations is that meaning is not attached to, or invested in, the material world—place is not the object of meaning. Rather, "place" is a construct produced in the application of mental structures through practice; practice in the objectified physical world reproduces the mental structures of which place is a part. Bourdieu also locates the source of spatial meaning in collective history, which individuals acquire as members of society and act out, producing the material world and objective structures, of which they may not be totally aware.

#### RITUAL-SPATIAL RELATIONS: COMPLEX SOCIETIES

Although ritual practices share many commonalities across cultures, some important contrasts between complex and nonliterate societies affect the direct application of theoretical and substantive insights to contemporary urban festivals. Unlike small-scale, homogeneous, and relatively egalitarian nonliterate societies, complex societies are substantially more socially heterogeneous, specialized, stratified, and somewhat fragmented; they lack the degree of uniformity and consensus in knowledge, beliefs, and values more typical of societies with simpler technologies. While rituals everywhere depend on classificatory schemes to structure symbolic meaning, these systems may not appear to be as cohesively organized, nor is belief in them necessarily shared as completely, equally, or profoundly. As a result of social heterogeneity, ritual efficacy can be diluted. Turner (1977) suggests the *communitas* of nonliterate society can never be realized in complex societies; rather, he calls the liminal state "liminoid," or playlike. Further, the scale of an event celebrated in many places at one time



(Warner, 1962), or a spectacle too large to completely experience (MacAloon, 1984) complicates the issues of ritual efficacy. While transcendent goals seem to be universally sought in ritual, these factors present in complex society indicate the quality and intensity of the experience is necessarily different.

Historical events can help in understanding these major transformations in ritual-spatial relations in complex societies. The seemingly obligatory but spontaneous performances of simpler societies often appear as self-consciously constructed ritual acts with no explicit instrumental purpose. Kinser (1986) argues that in sixteenth-century Europe a shift in the consciousness of performances from "presentation" to "representation," from participatory rituals to more passively observed spectacles, can be detected. Public celebrations in complex society are often created self-consciously, or even "invented" (Hobsbawm, 1983), with tacit intentions for validating authority, unifying a group (in opposition to authority), or promoting some enterprise (Lawrence, 1982). Because they are self-consciously conceived, they find their spatial expression in a carefully contrived and regulated stage rather than in more spontaneous settings.

Classificatory schemes defining spatial dimensions are also an essential component of cosmological systems in complex society; rather than contrast sacred with profane spaces, however, they tend to focus on the differences between public and private spheres. The historical roots of this development can be traced to European urban society and the transition of feudal structures to a bourgeois bureaucratic state. The liberal model of the public sphere provides for the expression of "public opinion" and guarantees equality of access coupled with rationally formulated rules of behavior (Habermas, 1974, p. 30). While this concept of the public sphere has no necessary spatial component, Davis (1986) links communicative functions to public spaces such as streets and plazas. Because society regulates the public sphere but permits access to all, public spaces become the loci of competition for expressing ideas; they are considered "contested spaces."

#### APPROACH

Bourdieu's generative principle of meaning and action in interactions with the material world and Turner's ritual process constitute the key theoretical orientations for this analysis, suggested in the following propositions. Spatial meanings are found in the generative principles of action rather than being attached to place as an object; place and its meanings are produced through practice. The source of meaning exists outside the individual in collective historical knowledge; socialization connects the individual to this meaning. Place can be seen as one component among several that interacts in producing meaning; it need not dominate or act as a mnemonic for sentimentality to be considered meaningful. As a ritual symbol, place may play a role, acting as a vehicle for transcendent experiences; places vary in the intensity and quality of their meanings.

The concept of space appropriation, mentioned earlier under the rubric of

transactionalist approaches, applies some of these ideas. One version derived from a Marxist construct emphasizes the individual's realization of essential powers and the self in the productive interaction with nature. Appropriation has also been explored by some phenomenologically oriented psychologists to describe a subjective experience by which the individual "confers meaning" on place (Korosec-Serfaty, 1985). Although space might seem to be the object of appropriation, in fact what is appropriated are the meaning and modes of relating to place. Similar to Bourdieu's approach, the Marxist concept of space appropriation further emphasizes collective processes; it stresses that the modes of appropriation are passed to the individual by society and that they are grounded in history (Graumann, 1976). Thus, the source of the meaning must be sought in social-historical structures and processes, while the mechanism must be understood in terms of how individuals generate appropriate behaviors and meanings for relating to place.

This study focuses on the role of three participating social entities which employ distinct but interrelated modes and meanings in appropriating the *placeta* for *Las Fallas*. Artists capture and reproduce the historical and cultural images in satire that reaffirm Valencian identity; city government regulates the use of the public arena for contested displays that attest to the legitimacy of liberal democratic values; neighborhood commissions generate the event and participate in the transcendent experience of ritual. The following includes a discussion of three bodies of evidence in examining the interaction of these ritual elements in the performance of *Las Fallas*. They include: (1) the history of the event, briefly outlined to provide the source and context of meaning; (2) organization of participating groups and the mechanisms by which meanings and practices are generated; and (3) the performance of the ritual event illustrating its transcendent qualities. The affirmation of Valencian regional identity cannot be understood apart from the historical development of liberal democratic values and the mythical history of its glorious past.

### HISTORY OF LAS FALLAS

Every year between the 15th and 19th of March, more than 350 fallas in the city of Valencia, and another 300 or more in surrounding communities, are "planted" and admired, each in the street or *placeta* of the neighborhood that sponsors it. As large structures, sometimes reaching 6 stories in height, fallas generally consist of four minor "scenes" surrounding a larger central theme. Each scene is identified and explained by satirical verse written in the vernacular language, Valenciano. The scenes and their characters feature personalities and issues from the preceding year's news. It is not unusual to encounter world leaders such as George Bush, Mikhail Gorbachev, or the Pope parodied in March as the most important world events are critically reviewed. Issues as diverse as the degradation of the environment, religious hypocrisy, political scandal, and the fear of economic ruin brought on by Spain's entry

into the European Common Market are commonly portrayed. These themes are executed with a supporting case of Valencian images of corrupt politicians, men and women in exaggerated or reversed roles, common folk such as workers, transients and tourists—sometimes appearing as animals—and folk characters and heroes.<sup>3</sup> Themes from Valencian history and culture, the centrality of rice, oranges, and *paella*, the *barraca* ("vernacular house"), and the kingdom and its special language are often pressed into the service of satire. The fiesta culminates on the feast day of *Sant Josep* ("Saint Joseph"), patron saint of the carpenters, with the *cremá*, or ritual burning of the images. *Las Fallas* has no direct translation, although the etymological roots of *falla* can be traced to the idea of "fire" and burning (Almela y Vives, 1949).

Tradition has it that *Las Fallas* originated in Valencia's Carmen district during the fifteenth century. Initially, it was a celebration of spring's longer daylight hours, which permitted the carpenters and their apprentices to move toward the doorway and use natural light. In cleaning out their shops from the winter's indoor work, the carpenters threw their rubbish into the street. They were soon joined by neighbors who contributed their own refuse to a public assemblage that ultimately met its fate as a bonfire. Eventually, groups of youngsters, spontaneously organized, would go house to house begging for materials for their neighborhood *falla*. What they collected became the stuff for the creation of effigies and caricatures of local residents and neighborhood characters as a form of public ridicule and community censure.

*Las Fallas* is not unlike other contemporary urban celebrations that pay self-conscious attention to their historical "traditions," especially in Europe, where many of these events were "invented" during the last century. "'Invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (Hobsbawm, 1983, p. 1). Historically, this phenomenon appears linked to the nineteenth-century rise of the bourgeoisie and political processes aimed at replacing monarchical regimes with liberal democratic governments. *Las Fallas* was, par excellence, a tradition invented and promoted for purposes beyond its ostensible cultural value.

The nineteenth-century ascendancy of the European bourgeoisie over the monarchy, nobility, and Church had significant implications for the development of public life and the definition and regulation of public spaces. Habermas (1974) argues that bourgeois reforms aimed at ensuring free commodity exchange and the growth of capitalism had irreversible effects on the concept of the public sphere. The creation of a liberal model of public life required the regulation of communications media, including newspapers and public spaces, to ensure debate and open discussion among a presumably reasoning public.

<sup>3</sup>Not much has been written on *Las Fallas* outside of Valencia; it is well known that Madrileños find it an embarrassment to their country, and even many Valencians feign no interest in what they consider a disgusting and revolting display. Nevertheless, the fiesta occurs each year, and continues to grow since its institutionalization during the last century.

The bourgeoisie claimed their authority on the basis of a shared concentration of power and by opposing the "principle of supervision" imposed by authoritarian regimes; to guarantee democratic processes, proceedings had to be made public.

Bourgeois insistence on implementing liberal reforms had a tremendous impact on the structure and meaning of public spaces as loci of communication. Liberal democratic reforms, however, did not guarantee that all uses be considered as legitimate, and even within the bourgeoisie there was great debate. Streets and plazas as public places acquire meaning from their sociopolitical qualities rather than their physical forms. Their use implies assumptions about rights of access and appropriate activities, including who should control those spaces, when and how (Gutman, 1978). The ritual use of the public sphere, especially for the performance of rites of rebellion, *charivari*, or *Carnaval*, is inextricably linked to the ideals of a liberal democracy (Davis, 1986). Although notions of equal rights of access give the illusion that public areas are vacant, unoccupied spaces, use is constrained by various rules and institutions that are differentially and selectively applied to the users. As differences regarding appropriate uses of the public arena arise, public places are seen as "structured and contested spaces" (Davis, 1986, p. 13). Contest over rights to perform and communicate messages in public constitutes the central issue in these urban ritual events.

The history of *Las Fallas* can be divided into two major phases reflecting these processes. During the nineteenth century the bourgeoisie "invented" and established *Las Fallas* as part of an effort to pull together an emerging liberal movement to oppose the monarchy. This period was critical for establishing the liberal democratic agenda and the legitimate use of the public sphere for the open communication and debate of controversial ideas. Divisions within the bourgeoisie, however, eventually led to conflicts over the content of *Las Fallas*. In the twentieth century the event was routinized and sanitized by dominant bourgeois forces and, later, the central government. *Las Fallas* gained strength as a metaphor for Valencian identity and retained meaning as a symbol of regional autonomy and opposition against any outside force by virtue of its operation in contested public space. This historical overview is aimed at understanding the growth and structure of relations among the three constituent groups of artists, the city, and neighborhood and the meaning of *Las Fallas* acquired by them. The foundation for this discussion is the inextricable linkage of *falla* and the neighborhood with the *placeta*, the contested arena for bourgeois-liberal-romantic ideas.

#### THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Although *Las Fallas* was only occasionally mentioned in official records before the 1800s, by the turn of the century the satiric fiesta began to attract the attention of Valencian liberals interested in promoting new political ideals. Spanish liberalism, underwritten by broad changes in the wealth and size of the bourgeois classes, and inspired by revolutionary events in France, aimed at

replacing the monarchy with a democratic republic. In 1812 the Spanish Constitution was passed, establishing individual rights and a free press, which provided for the use of public spaces to promote new liberal ideas (Sanchis Guarner, 1983).

As liberalism sought to create new identities to take the place of old loyalties, it associated with romantic ideals perpetuated in literature and the arts. Valencian liberalism embraced a form of artistic romanticism that idealized a return to local origins through the histories, cultures, and revival of languages of particular places (Sanchis Guarner, 1982). Romanticism was useful for legitimizing and unifying Valencian bourgeois liberal interests to oppose the monarchy in the first half of the century, but by the second half, divisions in the movement appeared. The moderate liberals representing the landed and industrial interests of the grand bourgeoisie wrote of past glories in Valencian history as an escape from the modern world and its stresses. They only wrote in Valenciano as a "hobby," but were culturally Castilian. The progressives, on the other hand, consisted of the petty bourgeoisie, artisans, shopkeepers, and skilled workers, who wrote in the vernacular language because their readers were monolingual; they used the press to actively proselytize their liberal political philosophy (Sanchis Guarner, 1983).

As a form of popular art, *Las Fallas* was initially seized and promoted by both moderate and progressive liberals, but its content became the focus of struggle for control by the two bourgeois forces. Progressive liberals and the lower classes of Valencian society often used the satiric form of the fiesta to ridicule powerful institutions such as the Church, Crown, and military, or any local authority. One of their favorite targets became the grand bourgeoisie, who they claim had abandoned their Valencian identity and adopted Castilian affectations. As the grand bourgeoisie acquired more power near the end of the century, however, the moderate liberals attempted to control the fiesta and subdue its critical content.

The arena in which control of *Las Fallas* was contested was the street. Regulating the ritual uses of public space began in 1849 under the ordinance of Buen Gobierno. Having previously used the law to regulate masked parades during *Carnaval*, the authorities asserted their right to formally announce *Las Fallas* and review artistic contributions to it. By 1872 the moderate liberal government required neighborhood groups to submit proposals for approval and to pay a tax that was increased each year in an effort to curtail the event. Moderate liberals opposed the event, because it was too uncivilized and inappropriate for a city of Valencia's stature, but were eventually countered by progressive journalists in 1886 who argued that the local authorities were repressing political ideas and art. They claimed that *Las Fallas* was an "innocent diversion" and convinced the mayor to lower the tax, which aided in permanently establishing the fiesta (Almela y Vives, 1949).

By end of the century, however, the original romantic liberal movement had been succeeded by the Valencian Renaissance, which became gradually dominated by the grand bourgeoisie. To promote Valencian arts and language they created cultural organizations that held competitions to stimulate ritual

stereotypes of Valencian folk culture, rice, oranges, the *barraca*, the farmer and fisherman, and *paella*. The grand bourgeoisie sanitized and invented the "traditional" life of the common folk according to the dictates of their own dominant class values (Sanchis Guarner, 1982). *Las Fallas* fit perfectly within their notion of folk culture worth preserving, even if it was also a crude display of popular sentiments. It was picturesque, concrete, colorful, and it treated traditional rural motifs and idyllic glimpses of the humble life, but it called out for refinements. In 1895, cultural organizations began to tame the grotesque imagery of the fallas by awarding prizes ostensibly for artistic quality, but these awards also lent another layer of legitimacy to the controversial event. By the end of the nineteenth century, *Las Fallas* had at least won the right to use public spaces, while its offensiveness was being increasingly restrained.

### THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

With grand bourgeois control over *Las Fallas'* satiric content and artistic expression secured through competitions, the early twentieth century saw the growth of an infant community of specialized artists who competed for prizes and professional recognition. Formal organizations for artists and neighborhood groups were established and, by 1930, formal citywide regulation of the fiesta under the Junta Central Fallera was created. The bourgeoisie also began to view *Las Fallas* as a business opportunity and promoted it for touristic and commercial purposes. Although organization and routinization of the event intensified, the satiric content, still controversial in contested public spaces, underwent additional "wholesome" transformations.

Following the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) *Las Fallas* was subjected to new repressive controls under Franco's dictatorial regime. Franco's strategy to unify Spain by abolishing regional cultures and sentiments included banning regional languages such as Valenciano in favor of the homogenizing Castilian promoted by Madrid, and prohibiting local festivals as a way of suppressing regional culture. Valencians say that *Las Fallas* was allowed to continue because to ban it would have meant certain rebellion, but major conditions and constraints were placed on its execution. Extreme censorship was instituted whereby official state censors had to approve each and every falla. Artists today claim censorship actually raised the level of sophistication, subtlety, and artistic quality of *Las Fallas*. To add "grace and charm" to the largely irreverent event, and to placate religious institutions, Franco also required neighborhood processions to offer flowers to the virgin at the religious center of Valencia (Puche & Lladro, 1978).

Emerging from decades of repression from the Franco government in 1975, *Las Fallas* experienced an explosive rebirth with the free expression of grotesque images replacing the former subtleties of satiric dissent. The fiesta now triumphs, however, in its role as the most exuberant symbolic expression of Valencian popular culture underwriting renewed claims to political autonomy. Today, intense competition between neighborhoods for prizes and individual pursuit of recognition for participation fuels *Las Fallas*. The continued spe-

cialized roles of artist and resident increase the fragmentation of the fiesta process. While the satiric content is still disagreeable to many, neighborhood residents manage to avoid direct involvement with it while focusing on the more wholesome atmosphere of year-round participation in neighborhood activities.

The invention, establishment, and routinization of *Las Fallas* over the last 150 years has produced a powerful popular art form for expressing Valencian identity. Historically the event succeeded in linking liberal-romantic ideals with public spaces for the expression of unsettling ideas. From the competition of interests in the public arena, however, the roles of artists, the city, and neighborhoods, their characteristic modes of appropriating the *placeta*, and their special contributions to the meaning of the event were forged. The interaction of these three entities is necessary to reproduce the historical meaning of Valencian identity that is relived through participation in *Las Fallas* today.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The contemporary organization of *Las Fallas* is complex and bureaucratized, with each specialized group of participants represented in a corporate body. Artists participate through membership in the guild, the city coordinates the event through the Junta Central Fallera and related Asambleas, and neighborhoods are organized into commissions. Each entity has a special ritual relationship to the *placeta* and employs modes and meanings particular to it in appropriating public space. Artists appropriate the *placeta* with technical skills and the creative expression of satiric humor, while the Junta asserts and maintains legal control over all public spaces, regulating use and providing for public order. Most intimately involved are the neighbors themselves who live in and around the *placeta*, experience it through daily interactions and ordinary uses, and mobilize it once a year for ritual purposes.

## ARTISTS

The design, construction, and erection of the neighborhood falla rests with the specialized artist. Until the 1850s neighborhoods took responsibility for developing themes and building their own fallas; soon after, artists began to be known individually for their satiric artistry. The task today is handled almost exclusively by artists who contract individually with the neighborhood commissions to produce the falla. Although the commissions have the power to accept or reject a design, as a rule they do not participate in the creative process. Rather, commissions seem almost oblivious to the satiric content of the artist's work except to hire a poet, or perhaps one of the resident volunteers, to write a satiric poem, published as a *llibret* ("booklet"), explicating the meaning of the falla in Valenciano. Both literary and sculpted versions of the falla, however, are essential to the celebration.

According to city regulations, commissions are allowed to contract only with falla artists who are certified. Most belong to the *Gremio Artesano de Artistas Falleros* ("Artisan Guild of Falla Artists"), which provides some coordination and promotion for *Las Fallas*. Artists and their apprentices work together in a *taller* ("workshop"), often located at the *Ciudad Fallera* ("Falla City"), a special part of the city. Many artists tend to specialize in adult or children's fallas, but all contract with several commissions to ensure them sufficient employment. Artists' careers are made by winning prizes in increasingly prestigious falla categories, which are established by the Junta Central Fallera.

The means by which the artists appropriate the *placeta* is through satiric artistry and technical skills. Artists are the translators of the romanticized folk tradition, creating falla themes from a vast repertoire of images from Valencian history, mythology, and literature, and interpreting them within the context of current events and popular issues. In addition to demonstrating technical skills in sculpting papier-mâché and fiberglass forms, artists are judged in the daring of their designs, which requires knowledge of specific *placetas*. The most prestigious fallas are also the largest and tallest, reaching over the roofs of nearby buildings with bold and lofty figures, perched or cantilevered high over the base. Because the falla must be constructed of wood alone to ensure easy burning, it is a challenge for artists to engineer the structure to accommodate not only the load, but the angle and force of wind blowing through the *placeta* during March. On occasion, fallas tumble before they are burned because of some miscalculation or other unforeseen event, such as a last-minute change in location.

#### JUNTA CENTRAL FALLERA

Coordinating *Las Fallas* is the responsibility of the *Ayuntamiento* ("city government"). Each city outside Valencia proper and all local commissions register with the Junta Central Fallera, an organ of the city's Fairs and Fiestas Commission. Guided by an elaborate code of regulations (*Reglamento Fallero*, 1982), the Junta is responsible for coordinating year-round operations related to *Las Fallas*, including overseeing contractual relations between commissions and artists. The Junta regulates competition among commissions and artists by creating award categories based on comparable amounts of money invested in the fallas. The Junta also keeps track of individual participation for the purposes of awarding merit prizes for length of service and commitment to the festival. These award structures provide one of the main incentives for individual and neighborhood participation in *Las Fallas*.

The Junta Central Fallera also oversees the *Asamblea General de Presidentes*, a democratic council comprising the commission presidents and Junta representatives. The *Asamblea* is the only elected body to draw together representatives from the city's geographic areas. It meets monthly to discuss issues regarding the interpretation of regulations and common problems such as insurance, finance, and liability. Although it has no official political role, it represents popular neighborhood sentiments distinct from party politics that



govern all other government processes. In 1982 over a hundred commission presidents came together shortly before the beginning of the fiesta to protest the wording of the federal government's legislation for Valencian political autonomy. In their minds, Valencia was not properly identified as a kingdom. The group called upon all the presidents to join them in refusing to burn the fallas at the *cremá*. Although the *crema* eventually took place as originally scheduled, the protest succeeded in gaining the attention of Madrileños who were horrified at the thought of having the grotesque sculptures remain standing any longer than necessary.

The Junta Central Fallera utilizes legal means to appropriate the *placeta* and exercise control over the fiesta. It represents and reproduces the struggles of competing social groups to regulate *Las Fallas* in contested public spaces; it celebrates hard-won liberal democratic freedoms while embodying the cumulative history of controls. The law of Buen Gobierno, which ostensibly protects public safety, established the principle that streets and plazas are the legal responsibility of local government. Today that responsibility is vested in the *alcalde* ("mayor"), who delegates authority to the Junta to regulate the external relations of neighborhood commissions by approving proposals to "plant" fallas, and overseeing the placement of fallas with respect to public interests. The Junta also arbitrates disputes between neighborhoods that claim the identical space for planting a falla and intervenes in disputes between commissions and nonmember neighbors.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONS

The most important actors in *Las Fallas* are the neighborhood groups, because they generate the event for themselves in a common public arena. With the exception of the falla of the *Ayuntamiento*, which is planted in the self-consciously designed central Plaza del País Valenciano, all other fallas are erected in unassuming neighborhood streets, intersections, or squares. For neighborhood residents the most powerful meanings of *Las Fallas* are played out in their own *placeta*. Each falla is identified by the name of the particular street, plaza, or *placeta* where it is located, as is its sponsor, the individual neighborhood (Reglamento Fallero, 1982). This inextricable linkage of the ritual object and event, place, and neighborhood group is the fundamental organizing feature of *Las Fallas*; it is the named public space that establishes their identity.

The *comissió* ("commission") is the effective local organization for *Las Fallas*; it is a corporate group organized on the principle of the neighborhood and consists of resident volunteers who elect by popular, democratic vote a leader from among themselves. The physical boundaries of each neighborhood vary in size and configuration because they are defined collectively by the sentiments of the residents. Located near the *placeta* is the *casal fallera* ("falla house"), the neighborhood meeting house that is owned and operated by the commission and is the center of year-long activities. The *casal fallera* is the locus for informal gatherings and formal commission meetings. All houses are

equipped with a large meeting room or hall, and a bar that serves drinks to members during events and may operate daily like a tavern. Commissions hold biweekly get-togethers, dinners, and celebrations, and organize periodic special events such as dramatic performances and excursions. Preparing for *Las Fallas* is frequently not the principal motivation for most commission activities, especially since members are usually quite detached from the design and construction of their falla. Rather, *Las Fallas* provides an excuse for neighbors to socialize throughout the year and maintain neighborhood solidarity.

Commission membership is voluntary and, although many Valencians participate in their own neighborhood, many prefer to belong to other commissions where they have friends, family, or retain a previous membership. Commissions are organized into separate divisions for adults and children, and men and women, and are intentionally structured to involve entire families. Power and authority is held principally by men in the *Comissió Executiva* ("Executive Commission"). They elect one of their members president, while others serve in one of fifteen required offices that parallel those of the Junta Central Fallera. Because the Junta and Commission are similar organizations, men learn how the Junta operates by participating in their neighborhood group. The men's commission takes primary responsibility for organizing all activities, including coordinating relations with the Junta Central Fallera, raising money, contracting an artist, overseeing all aspects of the neighborhood's celebration, and organizing activities and events throughout the year.

A *Comissió Feminina* ("Feminine Commission") consisting of all adult women selects the *Fallera Major*, an honorary representative who exhibits qualities of Valencian femininity, and also forms her *Corte de Honor* ("Court of Honor"). Sometimes the women's commission elects officers with responsibilities parallel to the men's commission. As a means to inculcate children with Valencian identity and values, a parallel set of commissions is established for boys and girls up to the age of 14 years. The children's commissions assume responsibility, with the assistance and guidance of the adults, for producing their own *falla infantil* ("children's falla"). The structure of responsibilities in the two children's commissions imitates the adults with boys over 7 years holding offices and girls serving as the court of honor for the *Fallera Major Infantil*.

Commissions raise money to pay for their falla and celebration by selling subscriptions, lottery and raffle tickets, and by asking for donations from members, neighborhood residents, and nonresidents. The cost of a falla can vary considerably depending on differences in the size and complexity of the design and reputation and skill of the artist. The richest neighborhoods do not necessarily sponsor the most expensive fallas; rather, according to Valencians, some of the oldest, "traditional" but poorest neighborhoods sponsor the most spectacular and prestigious award-winning fallas. A network of kin and friends, extending as far as Madrid and Paris, helps these commissions by selling lottery tickets for the falla at home. Although raising funds involves sacrifices, residents say, "We empty our pockets all year for the falla, but our neighborhood life is very rich."

Falla commissions act as the vehicle for Valencian neighborhoods to

achieve social cohesion and integration. A core group of regular supporters often includes commission members related by kinship; parents and children, brothers and sisters, and cousins dominate the lists of members. Generations of Valencian families maintain a committed involvement with their commission, using it in the reaffirmation to themselves and transference to their children of cultural and historical meaning and Valencian identity. Historically, the commission is remembered for providing a community refuge outside the home for the preservation of the regional language—Valenciano—and culture while they were threatened by outside forces.

Social activities such as soccer games, theater productions, special events, weekly dinners, and weekend outings are held throughout the year and provide an excuse and structure for neighborhood residents and families to get together. A typical summer evening at the *casal fallera* usually includes a dinner taken out-of-doors on the street near the *placeta* where the falla is planted. Dinner is typically followed by an informal commission meeting and organized cultural events such as a musical, theatrical, or poetic performance given by adults and/or children. While performances may not be terribly polished, they are sincere endeavors to maintain the Valencian cultural heritage and promote artistic achievements.

Although the *placeta* is the central ritual space for the falla, the *casal fallera* seems to also have special meaning. It not only provides the locus of constant neighborhood use but, painted in distinct colors and bearing the insignia of the commission, it acts as a mnemonic throughout the year for *Las Fallas* and the neighborhood's participation in it. Neighbors may view the *casal fallera* sentimentally, but its location can be changed without a great sense of loss. This is not possible with the *placeta*, the identity of which is inextricably linked to the name of the falla and its sponsoring neighborhood commission. The *placeta* is rarely used for anything but traffic or parking during most of the year. In fact, neighborhood residents rarely give the *placeta* a second thought outside the ritual event, unless there is a threat to its existence.

In the plaza Na Jordana, one of the oldest and most famous in the Carmen district, a conflict arose in 1983 between the *comissió* and several noncommission residents, who complained that burning the falla year after year had damaged their buildings and presented a continual threat to their safety. After study, the Junta Central Fallera required the commission to relocate the falla that year and offered them the opportunity to take the name of the traditional plaza to the new site. The issue provoked a great deal of anguish among members, who could see no other alternative except to move the falla. That year's *llibret* published a poem in which the neighborhood *placeta* "speaks" as if a person. "I am an old mother, destroyed but thoroughly Valencian. I desire to live but my time has come in spite of your esteem for my fame. I cannot doubt the love of the *falleros*, I honor your spirit and great labor which manifests itself all year long. In spite of your love for me, they want to take my name away and baptize another with it. If my time comes soon, then I beg you to let me die under the name of Na Jordana" (*Llibret Falla Plaça Na Jordana*, 1983).

The dilemma was eventually resolved by transferring the name of the old

*placeta* to a new location, thereby preserving the identity of the falla and neighborhood commission, but also conferring that identity on a new space. The original identity of the new *placeta* was less important than the immutable linkage of the neighborhood and falla with the traditional *placeta*. Thus, the ritual appropriation of the *placeta* by the neighborhood commission takes precedence over all others, although the event occurs only once a year. Because the *placeta* is a public place, appropriated by three different entities—artists, Junta, and neighborhood—it stands as the collective ritual symbol focusing the celebration of regional Valencian identity. In contrast to the *casal fallera*, which is occupied constantly by residents, and provides the vehicle and mnemonic for the neighborhood organization, the *placeta* is the only vehicle for ritual transcendence because it combines the efforts of the three key participants in celebrating *Las Fallas*.

### RITUAL TRANSCENDENCE

The ritual performance of *Las Fallas* is the transcendent opportunity for every Valencian, even if by comparison to nonliterate folk it is a liminoid experience. Three interdependent elements are involved, the falla itself, the *placeta*, and the neighborhood sponsors. Each acts as a key ritual symbol in the process of expressing and reaffirming Valencian identity. The falla, incorporating historical and cultural imagery in its satiric protest, ostensibly innocent in its artistic conception and execution, represents the best of romanticized folk culture. The *placeta* as a public place, regulated and controlled by the Junta and city government, signifies the local neighborhood space in which the liberal democratic cause is repeatedly played out. The neighborhood sponsors, the commission, and residents comprise the key social group that activates the ritual and for whom transcendence occurs. It is through participating in an event that symbolically merges a situated geography of region with its sociopolitical history to produce Valencian identity that individuals experience something bigger than themselves and their local place.

The city and local region of Valencia begin a familiar transformation for *Las Fallas* beginning with activities as early as February and culminating with the *cremá* on March 19th. By the week of the official celebration, neighborhood commissions have presented historic plays and given cultural performances, competitions for *llibret* and falla prizes have been held, the city's own *Fallera Mayor* and court have been presented, and a variety of parades have made their way through city streets and plazas. On the 15th of March, the fallas are planted, first the children's fallas in the morning, then the major fallas by midnight. During the next 4 days, official events include awarding prizes, offering flowers to the virgin, and dramatic displays of fireworks. On the night of March 19th, the spectacular event is concluded by the sequential burning of neighborhood fallas until midnight. At 12:30 A.M. the falla that has won the highest award is burned, followed by a fireworks display and the *cremá* of the *Ayuntamiento's* falla at 1:00 A.M. in the Plaza del Pais Valenciano.

While the official celebration of *Las Fallas* structures the event, Valencians and out-of-town tourists crowd the city's public spaces. Officially published guidebooks assist residents and visitors in identifying the theme, sponsors, and location of each of 350 fallas. Streets and plazas are closed off to automobile traffic to allow for the *plantá* ("planting") of neighborhood fallas, and people must resort to walking. For 4 days, hundreds of thousands of visitors progress—eating special pastries and drinking hot chocolate—from *placeta* to *placeta* in groups of family, neighbors, and friends in an attempt to see as many fallas as possible. In the center of Valencia, the largest and most important fallas are planted, and these attract the most attention.

Viewing *Las Fallas* is hard work, requiring apprehension of themes and images, which are partly explained in notes written in Valenciano and attached to the falla. Gathered around each falla are families, in which elders discuss with youngsters the significance of the images, or couples debate the meaning of the jokes. Historical and cultural images from Valencia's glorious past—Jaime I, founder of the kingdom; peasants or fishermen in traditional dress; folk musicians playing the *dulçaina* and *tabolet*; characters from Valencian literature such as Blasco Ibanez's *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, and the ubiquitous *barraca*, *paella*, and Valencian señorita—all come alive in the neighborhood *placeta*. But everything is not cute or quaint, nor a positive celebration of Valencian culture; serious issues are also critically examined in the public arena. One falla portrays the Church, capitalism, and weapons of war as a three-headed dragon; others ridicule divorce, birth control, tourism, the adulteration of foods, consumerism, and the contrast between liberty and a dictatorship.

Each neighborhood organizes its own public celebration beginning with the *plantá*, which requires the presence of commission members and their families. The commission hosts a supper in the street just in front of the *casal fallera* before the planting and celebrates with drinks afterwards. It is never completely certain that the planting will succeed, since the falla is brought in pieces by the artist and reconstructed on site with patching and painting continuing into the night. When the final hour for the *cremá* arrives 4 days later, neighbors gather in the *placeta* to see their falla, along with 350 others, go up in smoke. Tears well in people's eyes as they say goodbye to a year's worth of effort, yet sadness is the expected sentiment since the falla by its nature cannot last.

*Las Fallas* promotes the affirmation of Valencian cultural identity at the neighborhood level but provides an experience that reaches beyond local space and present time. Transcendence depends on the contribution of each of three key elements. The falla itself is the quintessential representation of satirical dissent and social protest, the *placeta* provides the local public arena for its expression, and the neighborhood commission constitutes the organizing group for whom transcendence takes place. Transcendence depends on the ritual linkage of ritual elements that cross-cut geographic and temporal units. Celebrating *Las Fallas* structurally connects neighbors in the local *placeta* with the same celebration carried out simultaneously in other plazas and streets

throughout the city, at city hall, and within the region. Joining the celebration across a hierarchy of geographic units broadens the local experience and solidifies the sense of community within broad territorial boundaries. In linking the present with the past, the symbolic content of *Las Fallas* glorifies the invented, romanticized history of Valencian identity, while reaffirming the liberal democratic right to express ideas in a public sphere established during the last century. As a ritual symbol, the neighborhood *placeta* provides the localized version of contested space where residents and their children reaffirm their Valencian identity, and it constitutes at the moment of the *cremá* the setting in which time and place are transcended.

## CONCLUSION

The role of *la placeta* in the ritual transcendence of time and place in *Las Fallas* is found in its contribution to the affirmation of cultural identity. Although the *placeta* is situated in the neighborhood, its appropriation by artists and the city guarantees that its meaning is the product of the collective participation of constituent groups rather than the idiosyncracies of a local entity. The meaning of the *placeta* is not derived simply from the occupation of territory by its most proximate group—the neighborhood—but by the production of form and meaning in space, whether it is ephemeral, in the case of artists, or abstract, in the case of the city. As a ritual symbol the *placeta* both generates and acquires meaning by interacting with all other symbols within the context of collectively produced historical meanings. While the historical meanings consist of bourgeois ideals for a liberal democracy supported by a romantic artistic movement, today's Valencians continue the liberal tradition within the context of recurring symbolic and actual dissension.

The *placeta* cannot be said to have meaning as an object nor hold much sentimental value; rather, its meaning becomes evident as a critical element during the actual moment of ritual transcendence and conscious only when a threat to its collective identity linking the neighborhood and *falla* is challenged. In contrast with the *casal fallera*, which generates daily activity and sentimental value, the *placeta* is only activated at special times. Places, then, can vary in terms of the quality and intensity of their meanings, and they differ in ways in which people incorporate them into meaning and practice systems. And, rather than attach meaning to place, through practice, places become the principal products of conceptual systems that tie together temporally and spatially disparate elements in moments of heightened communality.

## DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This analysis of the ritual uses of space suggests that studies of place attachment can successfully attend to ephemeral qualities of place meanings, especially in complex societies. Given the difficulties associated with studies of

ritual, however, the notion of space appropriation suggests a fruitful way to investigate these aspects further. It not only provides a vehicle to explore interactions not apparent in everyday uses, and to relate them to the complex of meanings and uses in other contexts, but enables the identification of contributions by various social entities and the specification of subtle differences in the kinds of meanings generated. The possibility of examining ritual-spatial relations at various levels of social organization—family, neighborhood, community, and nation—and in different types of institutional configurations, including political, religious, and corporate, constitutes likely areas for further research. Key questions include the nature of meanings associated with place as a function of ritual activity as opposed to daily routine, the role of spatial elements in transcendent experiences, and the influence of complex social structural elements in the generation of place meanings.

A second area of research is the further investigation of history as a means to elucidate the meanings people associate with place, especially in complex society. Since history is not only sequential, but cumulative, it often embodies contradictory values and sentiments that people express in their interactions with space. Although all these meanings are valid, but many are not consciously experienced, they cannot be understood without an historical perspective. Thus, recommendations for future research, especially in complex society, must also emphasize the use of historical records and archival materials in the interpretation of attachment to place.

A final area that suggests further attention is the consideration of differences in place meanings. Since places do not all acquire meaning of the same quality or to the same degree, investigations of place should critically examine these differences. Although strongly meaningful places are attractive for study, less noticeable places found in the interstices of urban life may be more important to the quality of everyday life. Environment-behavior researchers and designers alike may be well advised to attend to spaces that are used as a “means” or “vehicle” for the evocation of meaning through ritual and other activities, but to which lasting, sentimental meanings do not necessarily adhere.

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# Thresholds to an Alternate Realm

MAPPING THE CHASEWORLD IN NEW JERSEY'S PINE BARRENS

MARY HUFFORD

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Folklorists tend to study cultures and communities by paying close attention to stylized genres or traditional expressive behaviors. In recent decades as the emphasis in the field of folklore has shifted from studies that are text centered to studies that are more context oriented, a number of folklorists have turned their attention to the interrelations of tradition and environment. Of all genres attached to places, narratives and place names traditionally have drawn the most attention from folklorists. In particular, folklorists have long sensed a deep connection between legendry and topography (Dorson, 1971) and have undertaken studies of migratory legends, and the role of physical settings, in nurturing narrative traditions (Honko, 1981; Moss, 1983). Gradually the collection and study of folklore as static migratory items has developed into the investigation of the reciprocity between traditional genres and their settings (Allen, 1990). Folklore, which "vivifies place," is seen to be inspired and reinforced by distinctive physical features in the local setting (Moss, 1983). Lauri Honko notes that when "milieu dominants," as he calls such features, are constituted as places, their names become a powerful means of perpetuating local tradition (Cochrane, 1987; Honko, 1981). Other scholars have explored ways in which communities use traditional materials both to enhance their

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sense of belonging within a locale or region and to distinguish themselves from outsiders (Jones, 1976). The distinctive identity arising from interactions with the environment adheres to people and setting.

Endeavoring to understand landscapes from another direction, geographers and planners have indicated that folklore opens a unique portal onto local worldview and geography. Geographer Edmunds Bunkse (1978) observes that

folklore can be . . . an indicator of the culture of a people, their collective sense of place in the world, and of the meanings with which they imbue the landscape. . . . Moreover, folklore can open a window onto the world as it was experienced by common people in the past—an area that is altogether inaccessible to the tests and questionnaires of social and behavioral scientists. (p. 561)

Yi Fu Tuan (1974) suggests that traditional expressions comprise the richest source of information about the local experience of the environment—perhaps the only one. “The complex attitude of the native [toward his environment] can be expressed by him only with difficulty and indirectly through behavior, local tradition, lore, and myth” (p. 63).

Such forms of expression comprise what sociologist Alfred Schutz (1970) called “recipes,” standards for interacting with nature and society handed down with what he terms the everyday “stock of knowledge” (pp. 79–81). Elsewhere I have referred to traditional place-linked forms of expression as “genres of place” (Hufford, 1986): stories, songs, poems, visual arts, recipes, rituals, tools, names, and technologies in which knowledge of a place, its past, and its people is formalized and presented. Genres of place are deeply implicated in the construction and maintenance of place, and in the attachment of people to places. Some genres of place facilitate understandings of the ordinary world by enabling people to reflect upon it.

This view, which holds folklore (or traditional culture) and place to be co-constitutive, is rooted in the phenomenological notion that reality is socially constructed. Consciousness is always consciousness-of, the act whereby we constitute the world, assigning physical nature to classes and holding it there by rules (Douglas, 1973). There is, in other words, no objectively prescribed reality. Sociologist Werner Sombart put it this way:

No “forest” exists as an objectively prescribed environment. There exists only forester-, hunter-, botanist-, walker-, nature enthusiast-, woodgatherer-, berry picker- and a fairytale-forest in which Hansel and Gretel lose their way. (Uexküll, 1980, p. 29)

Places, as aspects of reality, are socially constructed, emerging within the world we shape for ourselves, a world we then discover and inhabit (Natan-son, 1970). Places do not exist apart from human experience and understandings; they are always places-for. As a folklorist and ethnographer interested in the interplay of tradition and environment, I look at how people construct places through social interactions mediated by traditional forms of behavior.

Broadly speaking, the notion of place entails human experience, physical setting, and culturally based meanings. But, as Alfred Schutz (1970) writes,

"meaning . . . only becomes visible to the reflective glance" (p. 63). Whether one is participating in community life or studying it from the outside, coming to an understanding of culturally based meanings requires one to shift from absorption in the world to reflection upon it. The ability of humans to shift rapidly between reflective and nonreflective states makes it possible to construct and inhabit what Schutz, building on William James's notion of sub-universes of reality, called "multiple realities," among which he included "finite provinces of meaning." These realms of experience alternate with the "taken-for-granted reality" or everyday "lifeworld" that ordinarily commands our attention.

The notion of the finite province of meaning has proven attractive to folklorists engaged in the study of music, craft, ritual, festival, narrative, and other traditional means whereby communities conjure and inhabit alternate realities (Abrahams, 1977; Young, 1987; Hufford, 1990). Such traditional, stylized forms are framed as "enclaves" within the ordinary, thresholds to alternate realities. Distinguishing between these states of consciousness is essential to the ethnography of alternate realities. Alfred Schutz argued that each province of meaning has a particular "cognitive style." Features of this cognitive style include distinctive orientations toward person, space, and time (Schutz, 1970)—all of which are implicated in the making of places and attachments to them. As realities that are based upon, but separate from, the world of everyday life, finite provinces of meaning offer a more controlled setting for the study of how realities are constructed, in contrast to the lifeworld, which is in many ways beyond recovery (Lansing, 1979).

In this chapter I will examine the way in which a community of men attaches itself to portions of New Jersey's Pine Barrens through foxhunting, drawing on fieldwork that I conducted periodically over the past 10 years. In the course of chasing foxes together for more than 50 years in the state forests of Southern New Jersey, foxhunters have created a finite province of meaning that I am calling "the Chaseworld." As a folklorist engaged in ethnography of the Chaseworld, I am interested in how foxhunters constitute the Chaseworld both by inscribing it and inhabiting it, making Lebanon State Forest into a place for the Chaseworld.

## PINE BARRENS FOXHUNTING

A brief, general description of what happens during a fox chase is in order. Foxhunting as it appears in the Pine Barrens bears little resemblance to the English style of foxhunting with which the reader may be most familiar. While both versions of the sport are centered around the same animal event—a pack of hounds in noisy pursuit of a fox—the participants and settings are organized and managed differently. Whereas upper-class, English-style foxhunters, mounted on horseback, "ride to" the hounds in a display of equestrian nerve and skill (Howe, 1981), Pine Barrens foxhunters, like working-class foxhunters

in other regions of the United States, "listen to" the hounds, determining from their voices what is transpiring in this venerable contest between wild and domestic canids. Whereas blue-blooded huntsmen, arrayed according to social status and heralded by registered hounds, express aristocratic dominion over the landscapes they ride across, blue-collared hunters use their unregistered hounds to enfold the land in a soundscape that broadcasts egalitarian ideals. And they follow the chase in pick-up trucks. The domestic animal players—horses and hounds—are instruments for developing and expressing the relationship between human players and the land, tools for fitting human players into landscape and society.

Pine Barrens foxhunters convene in the public spaces of state forests. At almost any time of the day or night from September through April, a motorist passing through Lebanon State Forest, just north of Chatsworth, might encounter a bevy of pick-up trucks parked at the side of the road. The men leaning against them, wearing billed caps, sipping coffee or tea, eating donuts, and conversing, are likely to be foxhunters, particularly if there are dog boxes built onto the beds of the trucks, and if one can hear the barking of dogs. This sound, which provides both backdrop and grist for their conversations, is never alluded to by foxhunters as barking, but as singing, music, yelling, speaking, hollering, and a host of other terms that link hound utterances with human ones. If the canine musicians move out of earshot, the hunters jump into their trucks and drive off to find another good listening post, the setting for their next brief gathering.

The hounds are, of course, pursuing a fox. By the time hunters are conversing over coffee, the hounds are "running" rather than "trailing." Hunters have gone through the ritualized sequence of casting their dogs at the fox's feeding ground, listening to the hounds pursue the "cold trail," and hearing the hounds' voices shift from "long notes" to the rapid-fire "chopping" that tells them the fox is off and running, producing a "hot track." Hunters have ascertained from the way the hounds are running whether the fox is red or gray, and perhaps whether the fox is one they have run before. Their familiarity with the way foxes run helps them to predict where the fox will lead the hounds. The first hunter able to get "in hearing" of the pack will radio the information to the others, who will join him as quickly as possible.

In the manner of sportscasters, the hunters interpret the canine chorus to each other, replaying and predicting, fleshing out characters, envisioning unseen landscapes, establishing the story. "I knew darn well," says Norman Taylor to his cousin Hank Stevenson regarding a favorite hound, "when I seen him straight down the road that the fox was close and he was gonna cross. When he's in the front of the chase he can keep dogs together, cause he's got the note that carries, and you keep 'em together, yeah."

"Yeah," replies Hank Stevenson, "They got him [the fox] straightened out now."

"He's gonna go back where he came from," predicts Norman Taylor.

"They're soundin' good now," Hank Stevenson observes.

"He bloomed 'em right in there for a little while," says Norman Taylor, giving the fox his due.

"Yeah, he did," corroborates Hank Stevenson.

"And he's got a good lead on 'em," Norman Taylor avers (Interview, Jan. 25, 1986).

These foxhunters are not interested in killing the fox, particularly since foxes are not as plentiful as they once were. Their object is to remain within hearing distance of the chase, and thus positioned, to unravel from the tangled course of hounds on the fox's track, the story of what happened. "Chasin' a fox is about like tellin' a story," as Norman Taylor put it,

Only the dogs are tellin' it to you. It's like they talk to each other. When you hear one start right up sharp, he's hollering, "Here I am! I got it! I got it! I got it!" And you hear 'em all come at him and get in with him. (Interview, Jan. 24, 1986)

The state bounty on foxes was removed in the early 1970s, though foxhunters began sparing the fox many years before that, according to my interviews. Now foxhunters determine from the way a fox is running whether it is time to end the chase. If a fox shows signs of fatigue (usually after several hours of running), hunters position themselves where they think it will cross a road in order to "break" the dogs from its trail. Just after the fox crosses, hunters begin cracking whips and commanding the dogs to get in the trucks. The melee of "loading" dogs is followed by "sorting" them, for invariably some end up in the wrong trucks. Hunters then drive their pick-up trucks homeward, often talking with each other on the CB radios until they can no longer make contact.

### DELINEATING THE CHASEWORLD

Pine Barrens fox chases are staged in the state forests of Southern New Jersey. A brief word about the setting, which serves as the point of departure for foxhunters, and their relationship to it outside of the Chaseworld, is in order. The distinction between the Chaseworld and the world of everyday life is heightened by its lodgement within the public space of Lebanon State Forest, north of Chatsworth. A setting in which many finite provinces of meaning are anchored, the state forest is itself an environmental enclave, intended as a "point of separation from the rest of the world," as Maurice Natanson (1962) put it, writing of parks in general:

. . . in it we are reduced from the business world, the academic world, the realm of other worries. We go to the park for greenery and release, for a soothing contemplation, and for love. . . . The brackets of the park make possible what is akin to artistic awareness: a reflexive consciousness that momentarily isolates the park from the huge givenness of reality and permits the artist to achieve a fresh mode of cognition. (p. 83)

As a separate world, the state forest provides a place, like the one requested by Archimedes, where hunters may stand, not so much to move the world as to invent and inhabit a new one. Within the commons of the state forest, alternate realities like the Chaseworld open the forest's fixed quantity of land out into a limitless frontier. Receptive to the multiple realities unfolding within it, the forest becomes, in Einstein's terms, "bounded but infinite."

In contrast to most of the forest's urban and suburban users, foxhunters tend to know the landscapes as only people whose families have worked and played within them for several generations can know them. Lebanon State Forest may be seen as a collection of archetypal Pine Barrens landscapes, molded by people following a seasonal round of cranberry and blueberry cultivating, pine and cedar harvesting, hunting and gathering, and woodworking and construction. Legacies of boom-and-bust enterprises from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are preserved in woods roads made by charcoalers, who in the sandy uplands processed fuel for glass furnaces, and the "crossways" made by timbermen hauling cedar out of the swamps. Dams and reservoirs built for eighteenth-century sawmills were converted into nineteenth-century cranberry plantations, and modified into the twentieth-century lake communities situated flush against the state forest. Some of the cranberry bogs remain in operation through a lease agreement with the state. These are the landscapes foxes run across, and the landscapes that foxhunters claim as home. "I just love it here, that's all," said Norman Taylor. "I've tried the mountains and the hills, and it seems like I always come back to the sand and the pines and the smooth roads of the Pine Barrens—the cedar swamps and—it's just home to me, that's all" (Interview, Jan. 22, 1986). Coalescing person and environment, foxhunters often identify themselves as Pineys and woodsmen.

But opportunities for dramatizing that coalescence have altered radically over their lifetimes, as the woods have gone from private ownership to public ownership. The cedar swamps in the forest have gone from being economic resources for lumbering and gathering to recreational and scientific resources. Roads made by foxhunters' grandfathers for charcoaling have become substrata for dirtbikers; the crossways and dams left from the landscapes of lumbering and cranberry cultivation have become access roads for birdwatchers and specimen seekers; and Lebanon Glassworks has become a humble backdrop for a campsite. Foxhunters who lived and worked in Lebanon State Forest as boys and young men are now retired from such jobs as maintenance workers, bus drivers, and general contractors.

The social and political climate for foxhunting has also changed. Where once farmers welcomed the canine chorus, suburbanites complain about the dogs. Foxes have gone from being "outlaws," as one foxhunter put it, to valued beasts of the chase, and the woods, once depleted of deer, are now fully stocked with them, and with hunting cabins that come alive each year during "deer week" early in December. Onto these conditions, both historical and contemporary, foxhunters map their Chaseworld, situat-

ing it in a distinctive time and space, populating it with a unique cast of characters.

### INSCRIPTIONS

The physical aspects of any space are attached to socially constructed worlds through inscriptions. Some of these inscriptions are physical, some mental. Such inscriptions bear careful investigation in public settings. Mary Douglas (1973), noting that the whole of physical nature is endowed with multiple, socially constructed realities, laments that "systematic inquiry into how many kinds of construction can be put upon physical nature is not treated as a serious enterprise" (p. 10).

The hunters' inscriptions of Chaseworld characters and terrains distinguish and pivot between the fictive realm they are producing and the world of everyday life they are suspending. Chaseworld characters and landscapes are made to interact according to a set of unique background expectancies (Garfinkel, 1973), laws governing the Chaseworld's natural order of things.

Within the world of everyday life, Chaseworld props exist as enclaves, managed there as separate orders of event: hounds lodged within their kennels; trucks imprinted with images of the fox and outfitted with dog boxes and horns for summoning hounds; foxes sustained by feeding piles, which they surround with tracks that become portals to Chaseworlds. The woods are rife with Chaseworld thresholds over which hunters enter the Chaseworld, and touchstones to which they turn for proof of the Chaseworld's reality. Some are places engendered by Chaseworld incidents, some of them marked with signs; brush roads carved out to facilitate visual and aural access to the proceedings; fox dens, some of them man-made; burial places of foxhounds, and memorials to foxhunters. Milton Collins buried his favorite dog, Spike, in what is now known as Spike's Field, an excellent place to start foxes. "He's buried," said Milton Collins, "where a fox crosses his grave" (Interview, Dec. 12, 1980). Lead, the best fox dog that Norman Taylor ever owned, is buried "where he run his first fox," at the edge of Butterworth Crossway, a place now referred to as "Lead's Corner." "I've got all hopes of being buried there," said Norman Taylor, "being cremated and buried in the same place" (Interview, Jan. 22, 1986).

And at an intersection officially known as "Five Corners," a handsome stone marker commemorates Donald Pomeroy, a deceased foxhunter for whom the foxhunters renamed the intersection "Pomeroy's Crossroads." Below the lettering on the monument a hound is engraved in pursuit of a fox. "Believe it or not," said Norman Taylor, "by puttin' the sign there, people will see it, and they'll start usin' that name. Pomeroy's Crossroads, yeah, and that's how it'll get established" (Interview, Jan. 25, 1986).

The interplay of place and identity may be observed in the way foxhunters construct themselves as Chaseworld characters. The Chaseworld's central inhabitants—hunters, hounds, and foxes—are diligently inscribed as Chase-

world characters. In the hunters' system of physical and conceptual inscriptions, Chaseworld characters are mutually defined, contrasted, and cross-referenced.

Hunters heavily inscribe themselves and their surroundings with images of their quarry. "My father's a fox man," said Ramona Earlin, speaking of John. Presenting themselves as fox men, hunters wear hats and belt buckles on which foxes are printed or engraved; paste fox decals on truck windshields, license plates, and mailboxes; sport fox figurines as hood ornaments and bird bath centerpieces; and display paintings, photographs, and figures of foxes in their living rooms and on welcome mats. Foxes appeared on stationery I received in the mail from them, and I am told that at the funerals of two foxhunters in recent years the floral arrangements on the caskets were red foxes. Thus the hunters prominently identify themselves with the fox, displaying the creature's centrality in their lives.

Hunters also inscribe each other with Chaseworld identities, embodied in CB handles and nicknames. "Every name implies a nomenclature, which in turn implies a designated social location," write Berger and Luckman (1967). "To be given an identity involves being assigned a specific place in the world" (p. 132). Through CB handles, men graft animal identities onto their ordinary ones. Thus Norman, who drove a yellow Toyota when Donald Pomoroy named him, became "Yellow Bird." Donald Pomoroy, who drove a green Chevrolet pick-up, was "Green Fox." Harry LaBell, who drives a gray pick-up, is "Gray Fox." Others are cross-referenced to other Chaseworld animals. Junie Bell, who keeps a large number of puppies, is "Dogman," Wayne Giberson is "Blue Tick," and Gary Croshaw is "Redbone." George DeAndre's great concern over canine cardiac parasites earned him the name of "Heartworm." Others are named for animal aspects of their everyday lives and personalities: Leon Hopkins, who bought, sold, and boarded racehorses, was called "Horse-trader." Jeff Powell, who raises hogs, is "Piggy."

The Chaseworld's canine players are also uniquely constructed, in accordance with canons handed down as part of the foxhunters' stock of knowledge. They inherit hounds and foxes as entities whose interrelations have been crafted for centuries. The relationship between hounds and foxes reverses aspects of the predator-prey pattern that naturalists ascribe to wild canids. In the naturalists' view, the wild pack evolved in order to hunt cooperatively for game larger than individuals in the group—game like bison or elk that could provide a meal for the entire pack. Clearly it would be maladaptive for wolves (believed to be the wild progenitors of hunting dogs) to hunt small, inedible creatures like foxes as a pack. Yet one of the most important criteria for foxhounds is that they be "deerbroke"—guaranteed not to pursue deer, the kind of quarry related to the social structure of their wild ancestors.

Naturalists have sorted wild canids into three groups along the axis of sociability. At the sociable end of the scale they place the wolves, which hunt openly and cooperatively in large, socially stratified packs. At the other they place the solitary foxes, nocturnal creatures that stalk smaller quarry, taking them by stealth and ambush. To the "collective singing" of gregarious wolves



and the overwhelmingly "foxy" odor of the solitary fox naturalists assign territorial functions.<sup>1</sup> Without reference to the naturalists' views, foxhunters have apprehended and shaped these behaviors for many generations, endowing them with meanings distinctive to the Chaseworld. The dogs, intent on "owning the line," sing about it, telling the story of their progress along the tangled course set by the Chaseworld's arch-trickster.

Though they inherit hounds as breeds, hunters work with them as artists work with any fluid medium, endeavoring to make them fit perfectly the space between earth and human society. Through training, hunters are said to "make" or "finish" the hounds they began through breeding. Their breed of choice is the Maryland Hound. Not recognized by the American Kennel Club, the Maryland Hound is a strain of dog said by hunters to accommodate running conditions presented by the Atlantic Coastal Plain. "He's more adapted to this type of country," said Norman. "We get some open runnin', we get some heavy runnin', and . . . you can handle 'em a lot better because they're not just a wild dog that wants to take off all the time" (Interview, Jan. 22, 1986).

Maryland Hounds are distinguished by long, floppy ears (avowedly for stirring up scent), big voices, an enhanced packing instinct (which concentrates the music), and a methodical approach to trailing (which slows the pace, prolonging the chase and protecting the fox). Hunters continually monitor their construction of dogs and packs, breeding in desirable traits like intelligence, voice, and "bottom" (endurance), and breeding out undesirable traits like the tendency to "cheat" (follow the fox's airborne scent rather than the terrestrial one), "trash" (i.e., pursue deer), or "babble" (tongue without regard for scent). Above all they must "pack together." Said Norman, "We like to keep a pack of foxhounds that bunches up and stays in a bunch and that really can run together" (Interview, Jan. 22, 1986). Correlative to this, they must also take turns, exemplifying the egalitarian ideal of a rotating leadership. "If a dog is always in front," said John Earlin, "that dog is cheating somehow or other."

At the nexus of human society and physical aspects of place, hounds are made to replicate human society and culture through metaphoric inscriptions. In their capacities to function as team players they are likened to athletes, soldiers, and musicians. A tension between competition and cooperation is developed and played out in descriptions of hound accomplishments. Hounds are at once cast as team players, who "hark to" each other and "honor" the dog with the reputation for honesty, and as solo artists, consummate musicians, and leaders whose ability to trail with precision wins them authority over the other hounds.

Hounds that "pack up" make it possible for their owners to gather to-

<sup>1</sup>Canine ethologist Michael Fox (1971) points out that collective singing, a hallmark of sociable canids, "may serve some positive socially cohesive function for the group" and "may also serve a territorial function, informing other groups of their presence" (pp. 429-30). And the unsociable canid's disagreeable odor is thought to maintain territory and social distance: "An interesting correlation is found between the intensity of body odours, especially of the tail and anal glands, and the degree of sociability in canids" (p. 187).

gether in one place to listen, united by their shared understanding of the proceedings. Not all breeds of foxhound have the enhanced packing instinct. The Walker Hound, a famous breed spawned in the mountain south, emerges as a foil to the Maryland Hound, for it is not seen as a team player. Said John Earlin:

I have had Walkers and don't like 'em. See they run different from this type of dog. These dogs will run together, and every one of those likes to be ahead. If a dog was comin' up here that had it, the Walkers wouldn't even bother with that dog. They'd try to steal it away from him. (Interview, Nov. 15, 1980)

The ability of hounds to interact as a pack impacts on the ability of hunters to fraternize. Hounds that violate rules for canine order may be ostracized from the Chaseworld, together with their owners.

Hunters map themselves onto a communal pack through their system of naming, the means whereby they keep track of scores of unregistered dogs. Hound names designate genealogical and social location, and can barely be recited without reference to it. In the poetics of hound naming lie concealed mnemonic devices for keeping track of hound lineage and relationships. Thus, Randall Stafford named three littermates Coffee, Tea, and Coca; Donald Pomoroy named a pair Left and Right; and Robly Champion tagged three consecutive pairs of pups Slip and Slide, names that alliteratively describe hound movements in chases, as well as blood relationships. Norman Taylor paired sets of sibling pups as Nip and Tuck, Jack and Jenny, Punch and Judy, and Speck and Spotty.

Taken as a whole, the names become an ad hoc index to the hunting community, overtly linking pups with the men who bred them. Donald Pomoroy's Freeman came from Freeman Taylor, and a number of hunters have "Jake dogs" from Jake Meredith, Sr. Norman Taylor appropriated nicknames from the Stafford family to name a trio of siblings Snap, Chunk, and Bull. "And Johnny Earlin named one Norman every now and then, come out of me," Norman said (Interview, Jan. 24, 1986). Thus the hunters ply the landscape with hounds that nominally reproduce and reconfigure the human community.

Foxhunters organize the forest around foxes, literally inserting them onto the stage and maintaining them there through an ongoing effort. Hunters have been known to plant foxes, vaccinating them first against rabies and distemper, raising the pups on dog food. Hunters watch for fox food as opportunistically as wild parent foxes, placing within their feeding range everything from road-killed animals to surplus jelly donuts. If foxes appear mangy, hunters spread "slop" oil around, claiming that foxes are smart enough to find it and treat themselves. On learning that rabbits were plaguing a friend's garden, Jack Davis transplanted them to the woods in order to shore up a dwindling fox population.

Like hounds, foxes are uniquely constituted in the Chaseworld. Each fox is inscribed with an inimitable Chaseworld disposition, characterized according to where and how they run. "We can actually tell the foxes we're runnin'," said

Norman Taylor, "by the area he runs in, and the roads he takes, the crossin's he makes, yeah, so when you get a fox you've run a lot you can almost tell where he's goin' to go" (Jan. 22, 1986). A gray fox at Reeves Bogs, for example, is known to run in a circular pattern, the kind of pattern that lends itself to listening and seeing. "This fox," said Norman, "he belongs to run here, and he's going to run between here and over them briars, I'll tell you that right now" (Jan. 25, 1986).

Even when run for the first time, a fox reveals by its running pattern whether it is red or gray. Said Norman Taylor,

You take the average red fox, he gives you a lot better open runnin', and they'll stay up more than, say the gray fox. Now the gray fox, he likes the swamps and the cranberry reservoirs, any place that's heavy. He doesn't give you too much open runnin'. He keeps you in heavy cover just about all the time." (Jan. 22, 1986)

And Fireball, a fox of near mythical stature, was a fox who let the dogs see him. "He was a nice fox," said Norman, "He liked to be run. . . . I seen him stand on the road after you catch you dogs and watch you when you're tired out" (Interview, Nov. 28, 1980).

Most of all, the fox is a trickster, inscribed in opposition to the honest, team-spirited dogs. "Foxes aren't called foxes just for the name," said Jack Davis, "They're foxy" (Interview, Nov. 21, 1980). "They have all kinds of tricks," said John Earlin. "They'll run right along up a path and then turn right around and run back it. And the dogs'll go right up on it and there'll be nothing there" (Interview, Nov. 15, 1980). A dishonest beast on whom the entire reality of this self-cancelling world is centered, the fox fits the classic trickster paradigm, paradoxically directing its efforts toward suppressing the music for which its trail is the score.

Hunters inscribe various landscape features—burnt ground, tar roads, plowed lanes—from the perspectives of the animal players. "Pushcover," for example, emerges as a kind of vegetation that slows dogs down in their pursuit of fox.

"He's runnin' in the swamp now," observes Norman, listening from the road. "It's real heavy huckleberry and ganderbrush swamp, yeah."

"What other kinds of swamp are there?" I ask.

"There's open swamps like your gum swamps and whatnot, but this is all heavy pushcover, yeah. Where dogs have to just push through it" (Interview, Jan. 25, 1986).

"Ganderbrush" is the local term for wet areas covered with leatherleaf. "Ganderbrush ponds, we call 'em," said Jack Davis.

"Hassocks all through 'em," qualified his wife Ann.

"You sink right down in that right up to your hips," said Jack. "Foxes generally know where there's a deer path through 'em" (Interview, Nov. 14, 1980).

The landscape emerges more as an active player than a passive backdrop to the proceedings. Hunters recast the landscapes of Lebanon State Forest in terms of how it affects the soundscape. "The bad thing about plowed lanes,"

said John Earlin, "is that the dogs have to go single file—spread out so that the dogs in the back lose the scent and you lose the music" (Interview, Nov. 22, 1980). Cedar swamps, coupled with the right air conditions, enhance the music. "Some days in the cedar swamps," said Norman Taylor, "it's just a ring. . . .

Like at night you go down and you holler "Yo!" and you hear it ring right down through the swamp. Well, that's the way with them dogs. Every now and then you get runnin' those right kinda nights and man, you'd be surprised. It just sounds like the whole swamp is ringin'. (Interview, Jan. 24, 1986)

The landscape features available within a given piece of the forest are like a hand of cards dealt to the fox, whom the hunters depict as aggressively using landscapes that diminish its scent and enhance its lead. "He won't go out in these oaks," said Norman, "He doesn't have enough lead to go out in these oaks" (Interview, Jan. 25, 1986). A briar patch is the gray fox's trump card. "That's the thing your gray fox does," said Jack Davis. "He likes to take you in the briars" (Interview, Nov. 21, 1980). Foxes can debilitate dogs in warm weather, say foxhunters, by running up on the Plains where there is no water. Controlled burning, done by the Forest Service in early spring to eliminate brush that lets fires get out of control, leaves a charred landscape that overpowers scent. According to hunters, foxes manipulate such landscapes to foil the dogs. "If they get one [a fox]," said Freeman Taylor, "he'll go on that burnt ground so they can't run him" (Interview, Mar. 17, 1979). In winter the bogs, ponds, and swamps may turn to ice that foxes scamper across but that dogs negotiate with difficulty. "A gray fox," said Norman Taylor, "he'll take to these swamps and, if there's ice, which is in the swamps today, he can give 'em—he gives 'em fits, yeah, because the smelling's not that good in the ice, and they have a harder job runnin' him, yeah" (Interview, Jan. 22, 1986). Thus, fox-chases, combined with passing seasons, generate an array of landscape habits uniquely witnessed by hunters. "Every day it's different," said Norman Taylor.

#### THE SPATIOTEMPORAL MATRIX

Unfolding across a particular portion of Lebanon State Forest, and progressing through the ritualized sequence of casting, trailing, jumping, running, [missing, running, missing, running . . . ], breaking, loading, and sorting, the Chaseworld is set apart from the world of everyday life in time and in space. Turning their attention toward foxes and hounds, and toward each other as Chaseworld inhabitants, hunters conjure the Chaseworld, maintaining its special status through frames<sup>2</sup> that keep them temporally and spatially oriented, distinguishing what is going on in the Chaseworld from what goes on in the realm of the ordinary lent to the Chaseworld. Within those bound-

<sup>2</sup>Frames are metacommunicative signals that mark what is going on as something extraordinary, outside of ordinary reality (see Goffman, 1974, and Bateson, 1972).

aries Chaseworld places and inhabitants assume a different ontological status than they possess outside of the Chaseworld.

Hounds' voices endow the Chaseworld with a distinctive spatiotemporal matrix. The actual space of a foxchase is aromatically and acoustically delineated. Its center and point of origin is the trail of the fox. This trail does not circumscribe the space occupied by the Chaseworld; rather it traces the Chaseworld's peripatetic heart: ground zero. The outer boundary of the Chaseworld is acoustic, uttered by hounds claiming the fox's line. Beyond the pale of hounds' voices the Chaseworld tapers off into silence, defining an outer space.

Hovering over particular pieces of geography, hounds' voices shift from "long" notes to "chop" notes. Such changes in frequency bracket particular moments (i.e., "cold-trailing," "hot-tracking," "missing," etc.) in the formal sequence of the chase. Inscribed as "music," the voices help to detach the Chaseworld from quotidian time and space, and from the purposeful stance of everyday life. Yi Fu Tuan (1977) observes:

Music can negate a person's awareness of directional time and space. Rhythmic sound that synchronizes with body movement cancels one's sense of purposeful action, of moving through historical space and time toward a goal. . . . The idea of a precisely located goal loses relevance. (p. 128)

(In foxchases, of course, the goal is imprecisely located—the fox keeps shifting the center.)

Foxhunters develop their packs with the ideal of music making in mind, and their musical lexicon is highly elaborated. Norman Taylor likened the process of pack formation to that of forming a band or a choir. "You don't want all bass dogs, and you don't want all real soprano dogs, but you like to hear the voices mixed up so they sound good to you" (Interview, Jan. 22, 1986).

The Chaseworld's temporal structures are "constructed as dimensions of social relations" within it (Douglas, 1973, p. 71). Time in the Chaseworld is internally plotted, reckoned in part according to the recurrent sequence of events described above. These points of activity, which do not correlate in any way with clock time, are used to organize events. "As soon as they jump him," said one foxhunter, "he'll go on that burnt ground." Time-reckoning in the Chaseworld coordinates relations among the Chaseworld's human and animal inhabitants. Thus hunters may plot time internally in terms of the Chaseworld sequence, as when one asks another "are they runnin'?" and the other responds, "no, just trailin'," or when hunters determine it is time to break the dogs because the fox is getting fatigued.

Listening to the music of hounds, the hunters live through a vivid present together, immersed in the same flux of events in inner time. Hunters constitute changes in the frequency and duration of hound utterances as transitions between trailing and running, running and "checking" (i.e., missing the fox's trail), and checking and striking (the trail) again.

Steeped in the same flow of experience, hunters share an inner time of remembrance and expectation. The music of hounds not only cancels quotidian time and space, it evokes and epitomizes what Victor Turner (1969) calls

"communitas," a "community or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders" (p. 96). The music of the hounds dissolves the boundary between the selves of the human listeners and the selves of others, both animal and human. The communal pack of hounds carries the community of hunters, epitomizing their unity in the single sound it produces.

There is a sense in which the hunters actually inhabit the hounds who serve as their extensions into the animal event. Hunters locate themselves with the hounds by so directing their attention. As one local woman who uses hunting dogs described the experience:

When you're hunting [with hounds], you sit there and you listen and you concentrate, and it's developing a whole story. When you're all done, you weren't out there running through the woods, but you'll be able to come back and tell the whole story, because you were there in your mind. (Interview, Sept. 10, 1985)

Listening at the edge of the soundscape hunters distill images out of the canine chorus, describing the terrain, locating the chase in the forest. "They're briarin' in there," says Norman Taylor, listening from the roadside. "If you had a bird's-eye view, he's [the fox] crawlin' right underneath the briars. That's why you don't get no noise outa the dogs" (Interview, Jan. 25, 1986).

Jointly constructing the animal scenario, the hunters dramatize their immersion in the same flow of experience.

DT: He come out, hit the blacktop road, and run up the road a ways to try to

HS: outfox the dogs.

DT: Yeah, that's what he's tryin' to do, yeah. (Interview, Jan. 25, 1986)

And:

JB: Now what he's done before, he goes in and fools around in there and then he'll come back. And where he's gonna come out is

DT: anybody's guess

JB: yep. (Interview, Jan. 25, 1986)

Their ability to adumbrate and complete each other's thoughts without missing a beat is a hallmark of the shared understandings that distinguish them as a community—coinhabitants of a unique time and space.

Hounds are not only extensions of the hunters, but mirrors of them. Canons for turn-taking among hounds are echoed in the human arena, where, with talk for the sake of talk about chasing for the sake of chasing, hunters constitute the Chaseworld. Narrating the chase in the egalitarian fashion of sociable talk, hunters emphasize agreement over content. In this human version of *allelomimesis*,<sup>3</sup> everyone present is obliged to contribute. Much of the talk is directed toward turn-taking, toward equitable distribution of conversa-

<sup>3</sup>*Allelomimesis* is the term used by canine ethologists to describe the tendency of certain canine species to run together in large sociable packs (see Fox, 1971).

tional turf. Exchanges are characterized by invitations, echoes, elaborations, and rephrasings, as in the following evaluation of the fox, drawn out over four turns at talk:

[invitation]

NT: He didn't run as wide as a lot of foxes though. Jesus! He was a nice fox to run wasn't he?

[echo]

HS: Oh yeah wonderful fox to run.

[elaboration]

HT: Ran a three- or four-mile circle there.

[rephrasing]

NT: Yeah, he was running that one area.

Through similarities between rules governing both hunter and hound behaviors, the hunters "allow meaning to leak from one context to another along the formal similarities that they show" (Douglas, 1973, p. 13).

Out of disjunct moments in history foxhunters build up identities for Chaseworld places and inhabitants. The hunters continually invent a distinctive toponymy, teasing places out of seemingly undifferentiated woodlands. The Chaseworld toponymy commemorates outstanding events and characters, connecting them to particular spaces and moments in the foxchase sequence. Names for places to cast hounds include "Chicken Line," "Feeding Pile," and "Bone Road," where hunters put out food to attract foxes. Names for places where foxes routinely lose dogs include "the Bad Place," "the Briar Hole," and "the Featherbeds," a quaking bog near Chatsworth. And a place called "Underwear" came into being around the capture of a fox, according to Joe Albert:

There was a place over in Warren Grove, and I went over there one time to hear guys' dogs, you know, and I said, "Damn if I ain't comin' over here some night." And I went over, and the first night I went there, they caught the fox, and I pulled a bush down on the cranberry bogs, and I hung a note. And there was a pair of winter underwear hangin' on this road where I caught it, you know. The guy musta got warm, and he took 'em off and hung 'em up. And I put, "Caught fox by underwear," you know. And the guys laughed. They told me that so many times. They caught fox by underwear. (Interview, Aug. 12, 1982)

Such spaces, once distinguished, become important reference points in conversation.

Hounds' voices animate landscapes that become saturated with personal memories and meanings. Thus a hunter is reminded of something that happened long ago, not far from where the dogs are running. "Remember about thirty years ago when you had that fox treed right there on the upper end of that reservoir?" Hank Stevenson asks Norman Taylor.

Norman does not.

Hank persists. "You don't remember that? You and I and Herb Anderson was in there."

Norman helps to paint the picture. "One time I had a couple good tree

dogs, and if the gray fox run up a tree, they stayed right there and barked, yeah. Those two dogs had every dog barkin'. But now if you tree a fox you'll probably—it's just the end of your chase."

"Never know it," agrees Hank.

"It's just a matter of havin' a good tree dog, yeah," says Norman, bragging a little. "I've treed a lot of foxes when my dogs was runnin' 'em."

"When we got in there that day, the fox was in the tree," Hank reiterates.

"Up the tree, yeah," Norman picks up. "I had Jacky then, probably. A dog called Jacky. A blue dog, and man, he was the best tree dog I ever saw in my life. He could tree a fox. Sat right there and had all the dogs around treein'."

Hank starts the reprise. "Well, you and I and Herb Anderson went in there that day."

"Yeah, how about that," Norman muses.

"That's been a while ago," says Hank. "Yeah, a few moons's went by" (Interview, Jan. 25, 1986).

Through more than 50 years of chasing foxes together, the foxhunters have constructed the Chaseworld as a realm with its own history, geography, and populace, governed by its own laws.

#### BOUNDARY MAINTENANCE: CHASEWORLD INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS

Public spaces offer particularly interesting settings for the observation of place attachment. Belonging to no one yet available to all, the public space yields itself up to multiple inscriptions. The forest of foxhunters is a hidden world, wedged in among countless others, all of them vying for authority. Anchored in Lebanon State Forest, the Chaseworld jockeys for position with the worlds of deerhunters, dog-sledders, trappers, recreational vehicle users, hikers, campers, military installations that invade the soundscape, scientists, and growers who cultivate the cranberry bogs and blueberry fields.

Impinging on all words anchored within hearing distance, the Chaseworld comprises a unique real estate venture: "a sound-sphere filled is a dominated space," as R. Murray Shafer (1985, p. 89) put it. Through the music of hounds the Chaseworld emerges not only as a world apart from quotidian space, it annexes portions of the quotidian to itself. There is a territorial dimension to all of this, in the appropriation of one species' territorial signals to claim territory for another. At the heart of the animal enactment, the fox's line is conceptualized as real property, "owned" by the hound in the lead, or "stolen" away by unscrupulous canine interlopers from behind. The voice of the hound in the lead is packed with aggrandisement: "I got it! I got it! I got it!" as Norman Taylor translated it. And as extensions of their hounds, hunters become the proprietors of this acoustic space, "maintaining authority by insistent, high profile sound" (Shafer, 1985, p. 90).

Hunters keep the inscribed Chaseworld tidy by removing extraneous ele-



ments that are out of place. These may be thresholds to threatening or competing realms such as fox traps that capture dogs, and "woods cats" that compete with foxes for food. In the Chaseworld, a special problem is posed by the ambiguity of "woods cats"—domestic cats gone feral. A cat track is easily confused with the track of a gray fox, while the cat itself is an unwelcome competitor for fox food.

Anything that is not fox, but might attract the interest of hounds, is considered "trash"—a threat to the Chaseworld's boundaries. Thus, disparate animals in everyday life are lumped together and connected within this realm by virtue of their potential impact on it. Trash quarry include deer, rabbit, raccoon, and possum. A hound that pursues any of these is said to be trashing. (Interestingly, English-style hunters call this behavior "rioting.") Like the concept of dirt in Mary Douglas's (1966) formulation, both terms imply two conditions, "a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. Dirt, then, is never a unique isolated event. Where there is dirt there is system" (p. 48). Rabbits and deer would not be removed, as feral cats would, for they fit into the system elsewhere: rabbits as food for foxes and quarry for beagles; deer as the central figure in deerhunting, another important social ritual for these men.

Hunters recast and manage a variety of species in the forest according to their Chaseworld functions, admitting some, dismissing others. Animal players such as foxes and fox food (rabbits, mice, birds, voles, and the like) are given supporting roles, while nuisance animals, like trash quarry (deer, raccoon, possum) and creatures that threaten Chaseworld players—like rattlesnakes that kill dogs—are minimized or eliminated altogether. In this last category we must also include fur takers. Hunters patrol the woods for illegal leghold traps, which they confiscate.

Foxhunters must also defend the Chaseworld and its inhabitants against interlopers who fail to perceive the Chaseworld and against invaders who misperceive it. Some in this category pose no threat, like passing motorists, hikers, birdwatchers and the like, who may be attached as ad hoc audiences. Others are simply nuisances, like dirtbikers who tear up the roads, making them impassible for foxhunters' trucks. Chainsaws of woodcutters may drown out the music. But Chaseworld enemies like environmentalists and animal rights activists, whom foxhunters ironically call "do-gooders," have been known to misread and destroy Chaseworld thresholds, like man-made fox dens.

"Have you ever made a fox den?" I asked Jack Davis.

"I haven't, but *he* has," he answered, speaking of another hunter.

"They had one over in here," said Ann, "and when they were puttin' through this conservation and stuff, they went and dug it out, and throwed it out. Now why would they do a thing like that?"

"The idea is that the fox can go down this pipe where they [the hounds] can't dig in to him," said Jack. "But then some of these guys find 'em, they take a shovel and dig the pipe out and dig right on back."

"Just to be ornery," said Ann.

"Break it up, throw it on top of the ground," said Jack.

"They think you're doin' it to catch fox," said Ann, "And you're doin' it to preserve 'em" (Interview, Nov. 14, 1980).

To protect foxes from deerhunters, and manage their image before animal rights activists, foxhunters organized themselves in 1986 under the name of "The Sporting Dogs Association of New Jersey," intending to present their case to the State Fish and Game Commission. "They're trying' to take more of our season away," said Norman.

They're allowin' another season for bow and arrow for fox. Now who the devil would want to kill a fox with a bow and arrow, for God's sakes? . . . That's the reason we got together. And it's not to be called any foxhunting, because you get the do-gooders against you then. The Sporting Dogs of New Jersey. (Interview, Oct. 17, 1986)

The canine chorus is also a perceptual barrier, functioning as an acoustic boundary between Chaseworld insiders and outsiders. The inability of strangers to perceive hounds' voices as music is the topic of a popular anecdote often told to novice witnesses. "I think I told you that one about the people from Pennsylvania," said Jack Davis, in my second interview with him:

We stopped 'em, the dogs was runnin' close to a fox, goin' to catch it, goin' across 70. And we had to stop these people. And I was standin' there and I said, "Boy ain't that music for your ears?" And this one guy said, "I'd like to know how in the hell anybody could hear music with this goddam bunch of dogs yattlin' away!" (Interview, Nov. 14, 1980)

This particular anecdote, which illuminates the boundary between those who inhabit the Chaseworld and those who do not, requires an outsider audience, in whose presence the foxhunters may perform to each other (Toelken 1979, p. 112). Hunters are not only authors of the realm, but gatekeepers who can admit strangers or deny them access if they try to enter through the wrong portal.

### PLACE AS KOMMUNICATIVE UMWELT

The perceptual boundary that enfolds hunters in the rich, intersubjective world they have created is ephemeral, temporarily staking out a region within which they escape from the isolation of individual consciousness. Sociability, termed "fellowship" by the foxhunters, is one of the true aims of foxhunting. "That's what it's all about," said Norman Taylor. "Good fellowship, where you can tease someone and no one gets mad" (Interview, Jan. 25, 1986). Through their acts of listening and interpretation the hunters shape themselves into a human community. Sociable talk, talk for its own sake, emphasizes form over content, freeing its participants from the hierarchies that burden the interactions of everyday life. The hunters build what Georg Simmel (1971) calls "an ideal sociological world" in which "the pleasure of the individual is always contingent upon the joy of others; here, by definition, no one can have his satisfaction at the cost of contrary experiences on the part of others" (p. 132).

Reflecting on their own society as it is emulated by animals, they achieve fellowship within the soundscape emanating from gregarious canids in pursuit of a mysterious, marginal beast.

The hunters transcend constraints imposed on them by both nature and society. They cannot smell what dogs can smell, and they cannot go where foxes go, but through their hounds they inhabit the ordinarily uninhabitable together. Writing of Asturian mountain children, anthropologist James Fernandez (1986) suggests that taking the animal "other" is a necessary step in the acquisition of social identity. I suggest that ritualized behaviors like foxhunting enable human beings at any age to achieve deeper understandings of their own humanity.

In the public space of the state forest, then, we find one species, human beings, using the territorial signals of other species, the wild and domestic canids, to lay claim to a variety of landscapes. Onto these landscapes they attach a separate world, a world in which they define themselves as humans, friends, relatives, neighbors, and men, and through which they resist the official inscriptions of scientists, the government, and the upper classes.<sup>4</sup>

Creating, in effect, a "whole in which each person is a member and in which the network of exchange constitutes a surrounding world of communication (*kommunicative Umwelt*)" (Ricoeur, 1967, p. 71), the hunters accomplish society. Making physical nature receptive to their world of communication, they invent not only a place, but a realm full of places, to which they relate as authors, inhabitants, proprietors, and gatekeepers.

## IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

An alternate reality like the Chaseworld, spun out over enormous tracts of land, affords the scholar of place a rich opportunity for exploring the invention and maintenance of particular places, and the attachment of communities to them. In looking at the Chaseworld one observes not only the attachments of people to place, but the grafting onto ordinary reality of an elaborate fictive world rife with its own characters, toponymy, and landscape categories, and uniquely inhabited by its authors. Whether it sanctions or challenges the structures of everyday life, the finite province of meaning has the capacity to reinscribe these structures, making them players or props in a reality governed by a unique set of laws. Thus appropriated, features of any environment can become thresholds to an alternate realm, conjured up with the help of traditional forms like ritual, narrative, and artifact.

The Chaseworld raises interesting questions about the interrelations of space, community, identity, and culture. An obvious next step in the study of place attachments in Lebanon State Forest would be the in-depth study of

<sup>4</sup>For a discussion that contrasts hunters' inscriptions of foxes with those of scientists and an analysis of the implicit debate between upper-class and working-class styles of foxhunting see Hufford, *Chaseworld* (1992).

realms simultaneously anchored in the same physical spaces. A look at how the realities of trappers, deerhunters, all-terrain vehicle users, forts built by small boys, cranberry farmers, lumberers, birdwatchers, specimen hunters, campers, hikers, and forest managers are conjured up and mapped onto the State Forest would provide a sense not only of how people use ritual to articulate places and deepen their bonds with them, but of the possible interrelations among places conjured up by different rites and communities. Do these realities interact as elements in a larger integrated social system, are they mutually exclusive, or simply parallel worlds that barely or rarely intersect?

The Chaseworld is filled with places tied together and rendered coherent by the logic of the Chaseworld reality. What realities are made paramount through the inscriptions of professional planners, official managers, and scientists? Some studies suggest that our system of National Parks exemplifies a coherent collection of landscapes at the national level, but invokes fierce battles of inscription at the local level, where, for example, the national inscription of an area as nature preserve or wilderness does not square with local inscriptions of the same area as frontier or backyard (Brady, 1989; Hufford, 1986; Stanley, 1984). A comparative look at the realities being constructed would be a first step toward ameliorating the tensions commonly surrounding official landscapes.

The traditional cultural behaviors that derive from and perpetuate these places comprise vital elements in this investigation, and this holds implications for wildlife managers as well. Some outdoor traditions, like deerhunting and trapping, are fairly well integrated into official planning and decision making. In New Jersey, the Division of Fish, Game, and Wildlife calls upon traditional trappers to train novices, and deerhunters have managed to see their quarry protected for the sake of the tradition itself. But elsewhere the quantitative approach that dominates wildlife conservation might be supplemented by a process that examines the impact of decisions on *traditions* as well as on the numbers perpetuated in a given species. For instance, does the above-cited policy on bow-and-arrow hunting of foxes make sense in light of other traditions centered on foxes? Policies develop around a given species according to the social status of constituents involved with those species. Pine Barrens foxhunters are not like the landed gentry who managed to gain legal protection for foxes in Delaware, or the powerful association that did the same in North Carolina. Yet their sport produces an imaginative realm that, like great literature, somehow enriches us all.

In a broader vein, the twin notions that place is socially constructed and that any number of realities may be anchored in the same physical space hold implications for planners and designers in urban environments as well as the kind of rural setting described here. One implication of the present study is that visual approaches to planning that rely on "windshield surveys" or that "read" the landscapes are by themselves inadequate to the study of place. The Chaseworld and its places are constituted by hunters sitting in living rooms in Browns Mills as well as in pick-up trucks in the woods. Much of the Chaseworld is inhabited vicariously through hounds. Places are constituted in social

interactions which, though they rely on the existence of certain physical spaces, need not always occur within them. Also inadequate to the study of place are questionnaires and public hearings that attempt to fit information into structures generated by professional planners and designers without regard to traditional ways of doing things. While thorough investigations of the sort undertaken here may not always be practical or even desirable, inventories and selected case studies of traditional practices tied to any setting, either physically (parades, festivals, children's games) or conceptually (names, narrative traditions, visual representations), comprise an effective way to begin understanding how communities continually constitute the places that in turn shape them.

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# Community Attachment

LOCAL SENTIMENT AND SENSE OF PLACE

DAVID M. HUMMON

## INTRODUCTION

In their reflections on place attachment, Shumaker and Hankin (1984) note that "few fields of inquiry are so clearly interdisciplinary in nature" as the study of human feelings about places. This theoretical complexity is inevitable, for the emotional bonds of people and places arise from locales that are at once ecological, built, social, and symbolic environments. Although environmental psychologists, social psychologists, and urban sociologists have been particularly involved in analyzing place attachments, architects, anthropologists, folklorists, and humanistic geographers have also contributed significantly to this rapidly expanding field of inquiry.

As an integral part of this interdisciplinary work, studies of community attachment are equally disparate in their origins and concerns. The purpose of this chapter is to assess this fragmented literature and to suggest some ways that our theoretical understanding of community sentiment might be made whole. To do so, I will first provide an interdisciplinary review of recent work on local sentiment, based on empirical studies that are exemplary of widely different approaches. This integrative survey will clarify the multidimensional character of community sentiment and its complex sources in both subjectively perceived and objective aspects of the local environment. Building on this analysis, I will then propose an integrative conceptualization of community sentiment in terms of sense of place, a conceptualization that facilitates the

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systematic characterization of people's feelings and beliefs about their place of residence. Using depth interviews with contemporary Americans, I will document how different dimensions of community sentiment combine to produce profoundly different senses of place—of community rootedness, alienation, relativity, and placelessness.

## COMMUNITY SENTIMENT: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW

At the most general level, research on community sentiment can be divided into three broad approaches: those focusing on community satisfaction, on community attachment, and on identity and community life (cf. Shumaker & Taylor, 1983). Although these approaches inevitably overlap in some areas, they differ considerably in their conceptualizations of community sentiment, their disciplinary roots, and their preferred methodological strategies. In doing so, they provide varied and sometimes contradictory insights into the complex construction of community sentiment in contemporary American society.

### COMMUNITY SATISFACTION

Community satisfaction research examines local sentiment by studying how contemporary Americans evaluate the place in which they reside. Using social survey techniques, investigators directly measure people's subjective assessment of community and then analyze factors that enhance or diminish individual satisfaction with both the larger community (community satisfaction) and the local area within the metropolitan context (neighborhood satisfaction). This literature is particularly extensive because of its roots in both social psychological studies of perceived quality of life (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; Marans & Rodgers, 1975) and work more directly focused on issues of community, environment, and sentiment (Guest & Lee, 1983; Shumaker & Taylor, 1983).

A substantial majority of Americans evaluate their communities favorably: three out of four Americans (78%) report that they are satisfied with the places in which they reside (HUD, 1978). These favorable community evaluations are comparable to levels of satisfaction reported for housing and work experience; they are somewhat lower than evaluations of marriage and family life (Campbell, 1981). Though such widespread and favorable community sentiment may indicate substantial well-being in terms of community life, Fried (1986) has recently argued that satisfaction studies in all likelihood exaggerate such positive sentiment. By comparing people's assessments of actual and ideal neighborhood qualities, Fried found that neighborhood experience often fell short of desires, particularly where mutual relations with neighbors, recreational facilities, and opportunities for neighborhood shopping were concerned.

Though many Americans are relatively satisfied with their community or



local neighborhood, community satisfaction does vary significantly. Social ecologists have demonstrated that communities, as spatial-social contexts, have significant impacts on community satisfaction. Repeated studies indicate that both size and type of community influence community satisfaction, with residents of smaller, more rural places expressing significantly higher levels of satisfaction than those of larger, more urban places. National sample data indicate that nearly half (48%) of rural residents report they are completely satisfied with their community, while only one in five (20%) of central city residents do so (Marans & Rodgers, 1975; see also Baldassare, 1986; Campbell, 1981; Christenson, 1979; Dillman & Tremblay, 1977; HUD, 1978; La Gory *et al.*, 1985). Though evidence is weaker, high population density may also reduce satisfaction at the local level (Baldassare, 1986; Wasserman, 1982). Significantly, these ecological factors reduce levels of satisfaction irrespective of the social and economic characteristics of community populations, suggesting that communities, as spatial-social contexts, have direct, independent influence on community sentiment (see, e.g., Marans & Rodgers, 1975; Rodgers, 1980).

In addition to such ecological factors, other objective features of the built environment influence community satisfaction, although findings are somewhat contradictory as to the relative importance of such factors. Fried (1982) has presented solid evidence that higher levels of neighborhood satisfaction are produced by better housing quality, neighborhood quality, ease of access to nature, and home ownership. Such differences in residential quality substantially account for higher levels of neighborhood satisfaction among higher social classes and white Americans. Guest and Lee (1983) present corroborative evidence for these patterns: neighborhood satisfaction increases with home ownership, larger residences, access to local parks, and block design using cul-de-sacs.

At the same time, considerable evidence exists to show that community satisfaction is influenced by people's perceptions of their environment, and that such perceptions account for more variation in community sentiment than do independently measured objective conditions (Campbell *et al.*, 1976; Miller *et al.*, 1980). La Gory, Ward, and Sherman (1985), for instance, analyzed the neighborhood satisfaction of elderly metropolitan residents in terms of both objective neighborhood conditions and subjectively perceived conditions. Although such objective neighborhood conditions as the urbanism of the neighborhood, the income level of the neighborhood, and the amount of vacant housing were associated with satisfaction, such ecological, social, and environmental factors explained substantially less of the variation in satisfaction than did residents' perceptions of neighborhood maintenance and their happiness with neighbors.

The significance of subjectively perceived environments on community satisfaction has led other investigators to ask which perceived aspects of local environments are particularly important for community or neighborhood satisfaction (Fried, 1984; Guest & Lee, 1983; White, 1985). In one particularly exhaustive study, Herting and Guest (1985) examined the relation of general neighborhood satisfaction to residents' specific evaluations of 44 qualities of

the local environment. Here, evaluations of the social environment (types of people, friendliness, privacy, personal safety) and physical environment (condition of housing, visual attractiveness, cleanliness, noise level) were the most important in accounting for neighborhood satisfaction, with evaluations of housing characteristics (e.g., appearance, age) also contributing to variation in sentiment. Some other types of perceived neighborhood qualities that have been suggested to influence neighborhood sentiment accounted for significantly less variation: the location of the neighborhood in the larger community, the adequacy of government services, and the quality of local institutions.

In summary, although community satisfaction studies indicate that the majority of contemporary Americans are satisfied with their communities and neighborhoods, they also show that a wide range of ecological, environmental, social, and perceptual factors influence such local sentiment. Of objective factors, the size and type of community, the quality and ownership of housing, and the quality of physical neighborhood are particularly important. At the same time, residents' societal positions and their perceptions of their community also substantially shape their satisfaction with their local areas. In the former case, the privileges of class and race increase local satisfaction primarily through the quality of the environment they provide. In the latter case, people's subjective interpretations, particularly those that evaluate the quality of the local area as a social and physical environment, seem especially important for defining this facet of community sentiment.

#### COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

If community satisfaction research has analyzed community sentiment by focusing on the process of community evaluation, community attachment literature has approached local sentiment as the study of emotional investment in place. In part, this work has been motivated by a desire to study the nature and sources of deeper emotional ties to place than satisfaction. Using survey research techniques, investigators have thus queried residents about their feelings about moving from a community and whether they feel "at home" in an area. Such sentiments are only moderately related to community satisfaction, and they have roots in somewhat different facets of community life than community evaluations (Gerson *et al.*, 1977; Guest & Lee, 1983).

Interest in community sentiment as attachment also has deeper roots in the theoretical traditions of community and urban sociology, where concerns with local sentiment are intimately linked to a central question of the discipline: What are the consequences of the emergence of modern society for social and sentimental bonds? For classical social theorists, from Toennies and Marx to Weber and Durkheim, the transformation to an urban, capitalist order meant an inevitable decline in the quality of local community life (Fischer *et al.*, 1977; Hunter, 1978). This theoretical legacy received its strongest formulation in the work of Wirth (1938), who argued that the increasing size, density, and heterogeneity of urban life weakens the primary ties of urbanites to neighbor and kin,

which in turn saps the strength of local collective sentiments and emotional attachments to place.

Although this "decline of community" thesis continues to have supporters (e.g., Webber, 1970), this once-dominant perspective has come under increasing criticism for both theoretical and empirical reasons (Gusfield, 1978). Ethnographic studies of urban neighborhoods have provided ample examples of local groups in which neighborhood life and sentiment are strong (Gans, 1962; Rivlin, 1982; Young & Willmott, 1957). Though rare, attempts to assess declining neighborhood attachment over time have not verified the perspective. In a replication survey of residents of an urban neighborhood in Rochester, New York, Hunter (1975) found that rates of local facility use declined between 1949 and 1974 but that informal neighboring remained constant and local sentiment actually increased. Finally, social surveys have documented that community attachment, unlike community satisfaction, is not strongly related to community size, density, or type (Brown, 1989; Gerson *et al.*, 1977; Goudy, 1982; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Sampson, 1988). Such findings suggest that community attachment must be understood in terms of processes other than those involved in the broad ecological structuring of settlement patterns in modern, urban society.

Community attachment studies have been partially successful in delineating what these other factors may be. Long-term residence substantially increases sentimental ties to a locale. Though such longevity may do so in part by saturating the community environment with memories of significant life experiences, it seems to promote bonds primarily by increasing local social ties (Gerson *et al.*, 1977; Sampson, 1988). In fact, local social involvements—particularly those with friends, but also those involving kin, organizational memberships, and local shopping—prove to be the most consistent and significant source of sentimental ties to local places (Gerson *et al.*, 1977; Guest & Lee, 1983; Goudy, 1982; Hunter, 1974; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; St. John *et al.*, 1986).

Community attachment is to a lesser extent also shaped by the objective features of the built environment and the individual's subjective perceptions of that environment. Housing quality and ownership modestly increase community attachment, though such factors may enhance community sentiment by serving as sources of local involvement as much as environmental resources. Close proximity to local landmarks has also been associated with neighborhood attachment (Gerson *et al.*, 1977; Guest & Lee, 1983). Subjective fear of crime has been shown to reduce local attachment modestly (Sampson, 1988; but see also St. John *et al.*, 1986), as has dissatisfaction with the physical quality of the neighborhood environment (St. John *et al.*, 1986).

Finally, community attachment tends to differ across types of people. As noted above, those with local involvements are most likely to form sentimental bonds with place. Local attachment also increases with the age of a person (Goudy, 1982; Sampson, 1988), but the role of life cycle on local attachments is clearly complex. Gerson *et al.* (1977) found that families with children tended to have higher local social involvements but were in fact less likely to be senti-

mentally attached to their neighborhoods (cf. Riger & Lavrakas, 1981). Finally, unlike community satisfaction, attachment is only weakly associated with higher social class: some evidence even suggests that more well-to-do people may be more willing to move than others, once the modest effects of associated housing quality are controlled (Gerson *et al.*, 1977; Sampson, 1988).

In sum, people's sentimental attachments to community or neighborhood take form in complex ways. Unlike community satisfaction, ecological factors such as community size and type do not play a strong role, nor do the social privileges of class and race. The environmental quality of the local neighborhood as objectively measured has relatively little impact, though residents' perceptions of the physical quality of the neighborhood are associated with attachment. Among objective features of the environment, only housing quality and ownership consistently seem to increase attachment to some degree. Rather, community attachment seems to be most strongly associated with social integration into the local area. Here, local friends play a particularly significant part in attachment, as do social factors that influence such local integration: for example, length of residence and life-cycle stage.

#### IDENTITY, PLACE, AND COMMUNITY SENTIMENT

Research on place and identity provides a third distinct approach to the study of community sentiment. This work explores the ways locales are imbued with personal and social meanings, and how such symbolic locales can serve in turn as an important sign or locus of the self (Lavin & Agatstein, 1984; Proshansky *et al.*, 1983; Rapoport, 1982a). Such place identification inevitably involves sentiment: minimally, self-characterization using place meanings may enhance or threaten self-esteem; more profoundly, environmental socialization may involve deeper ties of emotional commitment and affiliation.

Although investigators of community identity come from highly diverse disciplines, their research often uses participant observation or depth interviews to describe people's experience with community from the resident's perspective. This complex, often subtle work provides four fundamental insights into the phenomenology of community meaning and sentiment.

First, community identity research documents how biographical experience with a locale can transform the local landscape into a symbolic extension of the self by imbuing it with the personal meanings of life experiences. Cochrane (1987) describes how the identities of long-term residents of Isle Royale fishing communities are embedded in locale and are reproduced and affirmed in daily rituals, stories, and the meanings of the landscape. Rowles (1983) analyzes how long-term, elderly residents of an Appalachian community experience a sense of "insidedness" in their community, a sense that both promotes local attachment and supports a coherent, overarching sense of personal identity (cf. Lavin & Agastein, 1984). This sense of insidedness is at once physical, social, and autobiographical—of living within a known terrain; within an order of community life; within a landscape of remembered events. Ironically, this fundamental identification with locale is largely taken for

granted and unconscious: such autobiographical insidedness is based on lack of competing place experiences that would at once raise such identification to consciousness and transform it. (cf. Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1980).

Second, community identity research clarifies how neighborhoods and communities are imbued with public meanings and, as such, serve as symbolic locales with distinct cultural identities (Hummon, 1990). Suttles (1984) analyzes how large cities—New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles—accumulate rich local traditions that define and celebrate the distinct identity of place and at the same time provide a shared rhetoric for collective sentiments and local identification. On a smaller scale, Zelinsky (1988) documents the proliferation of welcoming signs in midsized communities during the last two decades—roadside statements that function to reassure local residents of their special, unique identity as much as to lure prospective visitors.

The significance of public community identities for community sentiment can perhaps be best seen in the way in which residents of different forms of community life use local community imagery to interpret self and other. Hummon (1990) shows how town residents use small-town ideology to characterize their identity as particularly easy-going, neighborly, friendly, authentic, as opposed to city people, whom they regard as generally rude, uncaring, and too materialistic. In a similar manner, urban enthusiasts appropriate the defended imageries of urban life and describe themselves as people who are liberal, open-minded, creative, active—unlike town and country folk whom they characterize as too provincial, close-minded, and out of date (Hummon, 1990). Such selective appropriation of favorable community imagery for self-characterization simultaneously facilitates the construction of a positive self-image and a sense of attachment to one's chosen form of community.<sup>1</sup>

Third, research on community and identity illuminates the way various social identities can become embedded in and communicated through the local environment, reinforcing the sentimental bonds for people and places. Duncan (1973) delineates how two competing, well-to-do status groups in Westchester County both define and express their group identity through contrasting tastes in neighborhood landscapes, and Rapoport (1982b) has suggested the role of the built environment as a nonverbal medium for the communication of moral reputation, social rank, and other significant qualities of self. Studies of ethnic and religious neighborhoods, particularly, have documented the connection of group identity to strong social and sentimental attachment to locale. Rivlin (1987), for instance, describes how members of the Lubavitch Jewish community, through strong group affiliation to their religious leader and intensive local religious life, have become socially and emotionally attached to their Crown Heights neighborhood, a commitment that in turn imbues personal identity with meaning.

<sup>1</sup>Because the public identities of particular locales may be unfavorable, local identities also have the capacity to stigmatize residents. Krase (1979) notes that inner-city neighborhood activists must work to construct a suitable neighborhood identity, using block associations, house tours, parades, and street banners to build a favorable local identity and nourish local collective sentiments.

Finally, community identity studies document the complex relations between community sentiment and community mobility. On the one hand, studies of natural disasters and forced relocation indicate that individuals who identify strongly with a locale are likely to experience emotional grief if they are forced to move. Though such feelings are certainly due in part to the loss of social integration, these feelings of apathy, disorientation, and grief are also caused by traumatic separation of the self from a community landscape of meaning (Erikson, 1976; Fried, 1963). Cole's (1967) work on migrant children also suggests that their continual, disruptive migration may function as a "chronic disaster," disrupting the ability of the self to form a strong ego-identity.

On the other hand, studies of identity and mobility show that identity changes may promote voluntary community mobility, and that such mobility can involve a more routine process of emotional disengagement, followed by recommitment to a new community. This process of identity change and community mobility is most evident in terms of life-stage passages, for instance, where growing-up involves "leaving home" or retirement is marked by resettlement to a retirement community (Bellah *et al.*, 1985; Perin, 1977). In a study of young suburban migrants to New York City, Fava and Desena (1984) found that this suburb-to-city move was often preceded by temporary (college) residence in a large city, during which future emigrants reformulated their conceptions of cities and of their place identity as a potential city person. In studies of elderly people who have migrated to Cape Cod communities upon retirement, Cuba (1989a, 1989b) has documented how this process of disengagement and resettlement is negotiated in the retirement process as a status passage. Though usually satisfied with their former community, migrants frequently came to regard it as inappropriate to their new identity as a retired person: its meanings were tied primarily to work and family life of former years. Upon arrival on the Cape, the retirees go through a second identity change. Having often visited and lived temporarily on the Cape before retirement, they reinterpreted their past place identity from one of a temporary, pleasure-seeking tourist to that of a permanent, year-around, member of the community. Such symbolic reworking of the self engendered a renewed sense of home and feelings of attachment to the new locale.

#### COMMUNITY SENTIMENT: SUMMARY

When taken together, research on community sentiment contributes to a more complex understanding of local attachment, both in the lessons it provides and the questions it raises (Table 1). First, *community attachment, understood as emotional ties to the local area, is best conceptualized as one facet of community sentiment*, along with *community satisfaction* and local feelings expressed through processes of *community identification*. Local satisfaction and attachment are relatively distinct dimensions of community sentiment, only modestly related in empirical work. Some individuals may be quite satisfied with their community without developing deeper emotional ties to the locale; others may

TABLE 1. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNITY SENTIMENT

	Research traditions		
	Community satisfaction	Community attachment	Community identity
<i>Imagery of sentiment</i>	Evaluation of community	Emotional ties to community	Identification with locale
<i>Typical methods and measures</i>	Sample survey	Sample survey	Observation and interviews
	Community satisfaction scale; Neighborhood satisfaction	Feeling at home; willingness to move	Insidedness; local identity
<i>Explanatory contexts</i>			
<i>Perception of neighborhood as</i>			
built environment	moderate	moderate	—
social environment	moderate	weak	—
local culture	—	—	yes
personal meanings	—	—	yes
<i>Position in</i>			
local community:			
length of residence	weak	strong	yes
friends	—	strong	—
kin	—	moderate	—
organizations	—	moderate	—
society:			
class	moderate	weak	—
race	moderate	—	—
life cycle	—	complex	yes
<i>Community as</i>			
built environment:			
housing	moderate	moderate	—
neighborhood	moderate	weak	—
social ecology:			
size	strong	weak	—
type	strong	weak	yes
density	weak	weak	—

express feelings of attachment to places they find less than satisfactory. Other dimensions of local sentiment are less well understood, particularly those involving identification with community as self-characterization or a sense of spatial "insidedness." Such sentiments are akin to community attachment as a form of emotional affiliation; yet, to what degree, and how so, remains unclear.

Second, *community sentiment is complexly determined, the product of people's perception of the local community, their social position in both the local community and the larger society, and the objective qualities of the community, both as a built and social*

*environment* (Table 1). This implies that an integrated understanding of local sentiment will necessarily be both interdisciplinary and profoundly social. Here, people's feelings about the local community arise in the context of the place as an ecological and built environment, but those feelings are also mediated by their perceptions of the community and their social experiences as member of the local community and the larger society.

Third, *different dimensions of community sentiment are rooted in somewhat different configurations of psychological, social, and environmental factors* (Table 1). *Community satisfaction* is strongly influenced by the community as an ecological and built environment, though such evaluations are also mediated by people's perceptions of the quality of the local environment, both physically and socially. *Community attachment* appears most strongly rooted in the individual's involvement in local social relations, though the built environment may also contribute to such emotional ties if perceived in favorable terms or if housing quality is high. *Community identity*, though grounded in both social integration and environmental experience, appears to build particularly on the personal meanings of life experiences and the public images of local culture. If so, these three facets of community sentiment may well be linked to different social processes, with community satisfaction following the macro-social dynamics of social class and urbanization, while community attachment and identity trace the micro-social contours of personal biography, socialization, neighborhood experience, and local culture.

## COMMUNITY SENTIMENT AND SENSE OF PLACE

With these preliminary understandings, I would now like to examine community attachment and, more broadly, community sentiment in the context of sense of place. By *sense of place*, I mean people's subjective perceptions of their environments and their more or less conscious feelings about those environments (Steele, 1981). Sense of place is inevitably dual in nature, involving both an interpretive perspective *on* the environment and an emotional reaction *to* the environment. In the everyday world of personal and social life, emotional components may well predominate sense of place: our perceptions of what places are like are always couched in a language of sentiment, value, and other personal meanings (Tuan, 1977). Whatever the balance of emotive and cognitive components, sense of place involves a personal *orientation* toward place, in which one's understandings of place and one's feelings about place become fused in the context of environmental meaning.

This theoretical perspective is particularly useful for exploring two issues raised by our interdisciplinary review. On the one hand, sense of place implies a multidimensional understanding of community sentiment, one simultaneously sensitive to community satisfaction, attachment, and identity. As I will argue, these varied dimensions of community sentiment, in fact, provide the emotional matrix out of which different senses of place are formed. On the



other hand, sense of place suggests that community sentiment is intimately related to people's perspectives on place—the ways people routinely think about the nature and qualities of the community in which they live.<sup>2</sup> By carefully examining how people's community perspectives are combined with local sentiment to form a coherent sense of place, this perspective may help to clarify the complex, but clearly important, relations between community perception and feeling.

To develop these issues, I will describe how five contemporary Americans feel and think about the city in which they reside, Worcester, Massachusetts.<sup>3</sup> I present these individuals, not because they are socially representative of the community, but because they express radically different *senses of place*—of rootedness, alienation, relativity, and placelessness (Table 2). As such, they provide interesting cases through which to explore variation in community sentiment and perspective. With respect to local sentiment, they differ in their *satisfaction* with Worcester, their *sense of home* or "insidedness" in Worcester, their *identification* with Worcester and urban life, and their emotional *attachment* to Worcester. With respect to their perspectives on Worcester, they differ in their *awareness* of the local community and their *imagery* of Worcester, such imagery varying both in terms of its favorable or unfavorable valence and the simplicity or complexity of its structure.

#### ROOTEDNESS AND SENTIMENT

Some Americans have a sense of place that is best characterized as "rooted." Such "rootedness" is always a matter of degree, but individuals who are so rooted experience a strong, local sense of home and are emotionally attached to their local area (Table 2). This sense of place appears in two related, though different, forms: everyday rootedness and ideological rootedness. In general, these forms differ in the self-consciousness with which individuals think about the community and their relation to the community. In ideological rootedness, strong feelings of satisfaction, attachment, and home are combined with self-conscious identification with the community, and all these

<sup>2</sup>A community perspective might be formally defined as a more or less organized, stable conception of the nature of communities (Gerson & Gerson, 1976; Shibutani, 1955). Such a perspective marks out locales, characterizes their varied qualities, and provides the basic interpretive framework through which the individual thinks about, and ultimately acts toward, the community environment. This perspective is constructed over time by the individual, in part from experience with communities, in part through socialization to the community imagery of his or her culture. It is, thus, in part unique to the individual, but much of the perspective is shared with others, the result of shared environmental experience and cultural imagery.

<sup>3</sup>These interviews are drawn from an exploratory study of sense of place in Worcester, Massachusetts, a central city of 160,000 in a metropolitan area of 370,000. Respondents were informed of the basic goals of the research; interviews, ranging from 1 to 2 hours, were taped and transcribed. Names and some nonessential biographical details have been changed to insure the anonymity of respondents.

TABLE 2. SENSE OF PLACE

	Sense of place: Dimensions					
	Community sentiment			Community perspective		
	Satis- faction	Home as insidedness	Local identity	Attachment	Imagery Valence	Structure Awareness
Rootedness: ideological	high	here	yes	yes	favorable	complex/ comparative high
Rootedness: taken-for-granted	variable	here	marginal	yes	favorable (mixed)	simple/ local low
Place alienation	low	there	no	no	unfavorable	complex/ comparative high
Relativity	variable	anywhere	yes	marginal	mixed	complex/ comparative high
Uncommitted placelessness	(moderate)	anywhere/ nowhere	no	no	mixed	simple/ local low

sentiments are situated within a perspective that is highly favorable, often comparative with other communities, and consciously articulated (Table 2). In everyday rootedness, individuals are not likely to identify consciously with their community, and their sense of home and attachment are embedded in a perspective that is relatively simple, taken-for-granted, and largely composed of biographical and local images of community life (Table 2).

### *Ideological Rootedness*

Alan is an ebullient, unmarried man in his mid-thirties who works in a service job with young children. Except for periods of schooling, he has lived primarily in two places during his life: a Massachusetts small town and the city of Worcester. For the last 8 years, he has resided in an apartment house in one of Worcester's poorest neighborhoods. During the last several years, he has been involved in transforming several apartment houses on his block into a renovated, cooperative housing complex, accessible to low-income people.

Alan's perspective on places is complex and rich in imagery. He enjoys talking about different forms of housing, neighborhoods, communities, and regions. When asked to describe Worcester, Alan responded with enthusiasm, offering a highly favorable portrayal of the city's atmosphere, its urban amenities, and its neighborhood organization:

I like this question. I've shared my reflections of Worcester to a lot of people; I was hoping this question would come up. Worcester's a city of neighborhoods. Called a city but yet small enough to be a town, a lot of town-like atmosphere. People are friendly, there's a multiplicity of ethnic groups, all with that kind of a small-town distinct flavor: Grafton Hill, Water Street, South Worcester, even Piedmont, Quinsig Village, North Worcester, Burncoat Street, the West Side, all that is distinct. And there's something for everyone. For me, I would describe it also as many, many opportunities for recreation of all kinds. The city provides the parks, the pools, the softball fields. For a more sophisticated kind of recreation, we have that at the colleges, Mechanics Hall, culture, that's what I would tell people.

Alan's endorsement of Worcester does not mean that he is oblivious to the problems of inner-city living. Of his neighborhood and immediate block, he remarks:

I live in one of Worcester's low-income areas. It's real tough—a real tough neighborhood, a lot of prostitution, and a lot of illegal activity, drug sales, pushers. But there is one street that is a dead end and has a sense of community, a sense of belonging. It's also very close to downtown, which is nice. An oasis in the middle of an inner-city neighborhood.

However great such problems, they do not constitute the defining qualities of Worcester as a community, nor of Alan's relation to the community.

When queried about a place he thought of as home, Alan designated the town in which he was born and raised, where his parents still live. "Home" is no abstraction to Alan—he has explicit criteria for "home places":

Well, I always say it takes 15 years to make a place your home. This is my second stay in Worcester; I still have [two years] before I can really say Worcester is my home. Even though my address is here, I vote here, it's on my license, it's on my insurance, I get bills here. I still consider that [place home] when I go home to my parents' place every couple of weeks.

Even though he no longer resides "at home" with his folks, "home" is still very much part of his daily life and identity. In talking about his parents' dwelling, he refers to it both as "his" house and his parents' residence, a place where he is comfortable, a place where he still "has a key." Moreover, when asked whether there are other places he feels "at home," Alan volunteered Worcester, pointing simultaneously to his dwelling, neighborhood, and the larger community:

I feel at home at my parents' place. I feel at home like in Worcester, too. This is my home in a way. I work here, I live here, all my friends are here; it's only my family there. I do feel at home in that sense. . . . [Where in Worcester?] It's 28 Maple street [my apartment], Piedmont neighborhood, Main South, the city of Worcester.

Alan's complex, favorable community perspective and his strong sense of home both facilitate and are reinforced by an explicit sense of community identification. Though he does not believe his 13 year's local residence entitles him to call himself a Worcesterite, he does appropriate the term and speaks of the term with considerable community pride:

Yes, I think of myself as a Worcesterite once in a while. I mentioned it takes 15 years before I consider myself a native. I like Worcester. I feel kind of sad and good that sort of nobody knows about it. I feel sad 'cause I'd like more people to know about where I live 'cause I'm proud of it. It's a nice place. I feel good not many people know about it 'cause I wouldn't want to have a population explosion.

His sense of community identity as a city person is highly developed and strong, and like other urban enthusiasts (Hummon, 1990), he characterizes his identity in terms of his explicit commitment to urban life, his delight with its opportunities, his feelings of attraction:

I consider myself a city person. I feel more attracted to cities. I like variety, I like to make choices—a city affords me that. . . . [Do you feel you have anything in common with other city people?] I think so. I make a choice to live in a city. . . . You could have lived out in the suburbs, you could have lived in a village. Another thing I share is that I'm committed to make the city a better place to live. I like to contribute to the city, and I also want to get something back. I think I see the city as a place for different opportunities, to nourish my body and to nourish my soul. That's important to me.

Alan's sense of home and his identification with Worcester and urban life are also reflected in his feelings of attachment. He has no plans or desire to move from his apartment and neighborhood, and he feels personally responsible for helping to build the housing cooperative in which he has been involved.

He is also reluctant to leave Worcester, and when asked hypothetically about such a move, he responds in terms of a place “similar to Worcester”:

There are only one or two other places I would consider moving to. One is Montreal. . . . It's a real dynamic city. It's the same kind of thing that attracts me there attracted me to Worcester. It's got a real atmosphere. It's cosmopolitan, it's got a neighborhood flavor to it. It's peaceful, and has a lot of things to do, I could speak French, things like that.

Such feelings of attachment, moreover, are linked to a general commitment to community stability over mobility:

[In general], it's better to be relatively stable. You bump into people all the time who have ten different addresses. Like where I work, I see emotionally disturbed kids. One of them is twelve; he moved like ten times in his first two or three years of life. That's crazy. You can't develop any sense of environment and sense of stability. There's always a sense of upheaval, of crisis.

### *Everyday Rootedness*

Ann lives in a single-family house in a middle-class area of the city. She grew up in a neighborhood about a mile from her current dwelling, and, except for some years away at college, she is a lifelong resident. Now in her mid-thirties, she is married and cares for her young child at home.

Like Alan, Ann's imagery of Worcester is largely favorable, but her matter-of-fact description is simple and direct:

Worcester's an old city. It's undergoing changes now, being revitalized. It has a lot of nice parks, a good school system, lots of beautiful houses, some good restaurants.

Compared with Alan, Ann has much less to say about different types of communities and places, but she does regard Worcester as a typical city:

I think Worcester's a typical city. A New England city. I don't really know that much about cities outside of New England. . . . [It's typical] because there are all different types of people within the city. That's probably why I think of it as a city rather than a town. . . . And I suppose the size of it differentiates it.

Ann's richest characterizations of Worcester come when she describes the city of her childhood and her sense of community change. She describes the area of Worcester in which she has resided much of her life in terms of childhood memories:

I had fun growing up here. People had big families in those days, and there were a lot of kids my age. We all went to the same schools and hung out in the same places. It was a lot of fun. . . . I hung out at Elm Park during high school—at the statue.

Such biographical characterizations of Worcester do, at times, become critical, particularly when Ann is portraying the city center and the “way it is changing”:

Downtown Worcester is entirely different. I think back to when I was a kid, and we went downtown on Saturday and got dressed up in your best clothes and your patent leather shoes, and you walked on Main Street and saw all your friends, and your mother talked to all her friends. You window shopped at all the nice stores; then you went to Easton's and had an ice cream soda and got on the bus and came home. It's not like that anymore. The Centrum attracts people not just from Worcester. It's very rarely that I see anyone I know when I'm shopping in the Worcester Center. It's a kind of cold feeling compared to the way I think of it as a kid. . . . It is just so different than it was.

Despite such ambivalences about community change in Worcester, Ann regards Worcester as home. This is "obvious" to Ann, so much so that she has given little thought to it. When directly queried about the matter, she notes her longevity in Worcester and her family and friendship ties: "Worcester's home. I don't really know any place else, and my family has always lived here, and I have friends from kindergarten on that I keep in touch with." When asked whether there were any objects or places in Worcester that made it "home" to her, she responded: "No, I don't relate Worcester to a thing. It's more the people. Family and friends." Only through explicit contrasts with other places does she begin to articulate her sense of environmental "insidedness" as an aspect of home. When queried about a place where she would feel out of place, Ann remarked:

I suppose in New York City I feel out of place. . . . I would feel uncomfortable there, kind of adrift there, no familiar landmarks. Or there are certain places you go to when you visit New York that are familiar but there's nothing there that I can relate to. . . . [Do you have landmarks in Worcester that you use?] I don't think of them: they're just there. So I would really have to think, maybe Elm Park, 'cause the things are just there. *You don't think about the everyday things.* [emphasis added].

Though Ann feels that Worcester is home, she does not identify herself in terms of explicit community identities. Despite lifelong residence in cities, being a "city person" has relatively little personal significance to her. When asked, she explicitly rejects the notion of being a Worcesterite, in part because the identity affiliates her with the changes in the larger community about which she feels ambivalent:

No, not as a Worcesterite, but I think of myself as coming from Worcester. . . . If I said that to a stranger or even someone who knew the city, I wouldn't be that proud of the city, saying that to someone. [How so?] I think the city is changing and becoming more like Boston, more crime, just the hustle-bustle of the city seems to be getting larger to me. And it has more of the problems of a big city: more unemployment, crime. I don't know—it's a different feeling when I think of the overall city, and then I think of the part of the city that I know and live in. . . . It's the idea of the big city and the idea of the neighborhood. I like my neighborhood that I grew up in but the idea of the whole city is not that appealing. It's just getting to be too much.

Nevertheless, Ann remains emotionally attached to Worcester. When asked about leaving Worcester, Ann noted that she and her husband have considered moving in order to buy a different house and to gain a little distance

from her parents who live in the neighborhood. But moving from the Worcester area or out of New England is "unthinkable":

My brother lives in Ohio. No, [moving there is] much too far away. I wouldn't even consider it. It's too far away, and I don't want to move out of New England. I like New England. I visited some other states, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and it's just not the same. It just doesn't feel right. Much too far away.

Ann underlines her feelings about "staying put" when she reflects on the advantages of living "in one place" as opposed to moving several times during one's life:

Living in one place is not an advantage in one way: you don't get to experience other places or other parts of the country. I think you miss out on that part of it. But I still wouldn't want to move for that reason. I would still want to stay here, even though I know I would be missing out on seeing what it would be like to live in the Southwest or some place else. I would still rather stay where I am. It's just a sense of security. . . . I'm just a homebody. I just like to stay home. I like my city, I just feel comfortable. I love being home and not working. I just wouldn't want to move away and leave my family and friends. . . . I think you have to have your roots some place. Some place to feel like home. You can move your possessions from house to house, but I don't think that it's going to feel like home. I think you need your neighbors, your friends, your familiar surroundings.

#### PLACE ALIENATION AND SENTIMENT

The fact that Alan and Ann experience a sense of place that can be characterized as rooted suggests that other Americans who have become separated from such valued locales may feel "displaced." Such displacement is often associated with constrained mobility, but it also may arise, over time, from the transformation of a place. Whether such separation from a valued locale results from spatial or temporal processes, it can produce real estrangement from the current community in which a person resides. Such alienation from community expresses itself in both a person's perspective on the community and their feelings about that community (Table 2).

Like Alan and Ann, Barbara is college-educated and in her late thirties. Like Alan, she moved to Worcester as an adult, and she has now resided in the city for over a decade. Like Ann, she is married and lives with her husband and children in a single-family home in a middle-class neighborhood of the city. Unlike Alan and Ann, she feels strongly displaced from the midsized, mid-western city in which she was raised and from Burlington, Vermont, where she has lived on two occasions, including a temporary stay the previous year.

When asked to describe Worcester, Barbara had much to say, for she thinks about Worcester frequently and consciously. Her community perspective on Worcester is also strongly comparative, and because it is framed by her sense of other valued communities, it is strongly unfavorable:

I would describe Worcester as an industrial city. I would describe it as dirty: I see a lot of litter and dirt all over. I see empty buildings with broken windows

downtown, I see a lot of open places downtown that look like there should be something in them, something going on, but there's nothing there. I would describe Worcester as a city that has a lot of traffic; the traffic always is going at a high speed. The main highway runs right through the middle of the city. I would describe it as a city that is not very proud of itself: it doesn't have much of an identity. I think it feels inferior. I felt when I was in Burlington last year that Burlington was like an open flower, open to the sun and real happy and excited and pretty and Worcester was kind of like an old bud, never opened, never really wanted to open. It had been kept in the dark and was never allowed to grow and open up and be proud of itself. . . . The one good thing I will say about Worcester is medical care: when we needed some excellent care we did receive it here.

[How about Worcester residents?] I've met some people who have been very pleasant who have, well, most of them actually are not Worcester natives. . . . A few people who are native Worcester people have been nice. I don't feel that Worcester is very happy about having newcomers or intruders come into their midst. I think they like things to stay just as they are, and if you have new ideas about the way things should be done, they really don't want to hear them because it's upsetting. I feel that most of the people who live here have never been anywhere else, or lived anywhere else so they don't know what it's like. They think of Wisconsin, for example, as a vast winter wasteland where there is always snow on the ground and the people are stupid. They're very provincial, and if you're not from New England, or better yet, Worcester, Massachusetts, forget it!

When asked about home, Barbara noted that "Burlington comes in a very close second" but that her childhood community was still home because of family ties, childhood experiences, and the familiarity of the landscape. Reflecting on Worcester, she then added:

We've lived in Worcester for such a long time, but I can't really say I feel at home here. I like my house, the inside of my house, I feel at home in the inside of my house. But as far as feeling at home in Worcester, I wouldn't say that I do. I feel very out of place here: not in the group, wasn't born here, am not Catholic, I feel I'm not a New Englander. I just have never felt like I belonged here, ever.

Barbara does not think of herself in terms of community identities. She rejects the notion of being a city person, and with her negative sense of Worcester and Worcester residents, she actively disavows any local identity: "Worcesterite? Oh, never! That's a bad word [laughs]."

If any place identity makes sense to her, it is that of region, and she speaks warmly and easily about the Midwest and being a midwesterner:

The Midwest makes me think of the whole idea of the farming community and cultures that have produced food for the country. I see that as a very worthwhile sort of occupation. Very noncorrupt, . . . not as heavily involved with government and politics. New England is basically sort of corrupt. . . . [Midwesterners] have a more relaxed way of living, and it seems to me a more selfless lifestyle. I see that people seem to be more concerned about their neighbors; here I see the people are concerned about their families. . . . In the Midwest it seems like there was more community spirit.



Such feelings of estrangement from Worcester, when coupled with her sense of regional identity, mean that Barbara strongly wants to leave Worcester. When asked how she felt about Worcester, Barbara volunteered:

I can't wait to get out of Worcester. Everyday I hope my husband will call me and tell me he has a job offer to go someplace else. I would pack up at the drop of a hat, and I told him I would carry our belongings crawling up the Mass Pike to get out. I can't wait to leave. I feel bad that my children have Worcester on their birth certificates. I wish they could have been born someplace else. Once we move away from here, I would never plan to come back again and visit. I don't feel that there are but a handful of people I would even say good-bye to when I leave.

#### PLACELESSNESS, RELATIVITY, AND SENTIMENT

For people whose sense of place is either rooted or alienated, the particular community in which they live matters a great deal. Although Ann and Alan differ in their awareness and complexity of beliefs about Worcester, they both feel they belong in Worcester, voicing a sense of home and emotional attachment. Conversely, Barbara feels estranged from Worcester and would like to move back to valued locales from which she has been displaced. Unlike Ann, Alan, and Barbara, other Americans express a sense of place in which community sentiment is much more attenuated or ambivalent (Table 2). What do these Americans suggest for our understanding of community sentiment and its varied dimensions? How are their feelings related to their perspective on the community in which they reside?

##### *Uncommitted Placelessness*

Margaret is a single, college-educated woman in her mid-twenties. Except when living in a dormitory of a Worcester college, she has lived in her parents' single-family dwelling in a residential neighborhood bordering Worcester's city limits. She commutes by car daily to work in a high-tech industry in a suburb, and occasionally she enjoys staying overnight with relatives in a Boston metropolitan suburb, rather than drive back to Worcester. Like many residents of central Massachusetts, she makes regular trips to Cape Cod during the summer, where she stays with either family or friends.

Margaret does not have a great deal to say about Worcester as a city. Though she has lived in the city all her life like Ann, she does not describe it in biographical terms. Though she regards it as a "big city," she does not, like Alan, characterize it in terms of a distinct urban culture. For her, Worcester is simply a "typical city," with its "good parts" and its "bad parts":

It's a pretty big city. It's getting better than it used to be. It used to be more rundown, now it's more built up in the last six years. It's getting nicer. I feel like I'm always defending Worcester—especially to friends when I was at school—people put it down. I'm not crazy about the city. It's where I live and there are

parts that are nice and there are parts that are not so nice—but I don't associate that with Worcester, that's true with any city.

When asked about home, Margaret made no mention of Worcester and pointed, hesitantly, to the house in which she has resided all her life. This dwelling, however, had few significant meanings that she could articulate—no rooms or objects inside that she regarded as special. She does, however, like living there because her parents are away “at the Cape a good deal” and she “can live there inexpensively.” When queried about other places she might feel at home, she responded:

At my sisters [in suburban Boston], the Cape, and at close friends' homes. I guess it really depends on who I'm with, not the place.

Margaret's diffuse sense of living “in” a significant home place, when coupled with her limited sense of Worcester as a city, means that she has little sense of local identity. When asked about how she feels about Worcester, she responded simply: “I don't mind it. Basically neutral.” After living two-and-a-half decades in the city, she rejected the notion of being a Worcesterite: “I probably don't think of myself as a [Worcesterite]. I know I am, but it's not at the conscious thought.” Noting that she lived on the “edge of the city,” she did not see herself as a city person or in terms of any other community identity.

No, it's funny, I live in Worcester which is a city but I don't consider myself a city person. I don't live downtown in the city. I live in an area of the city that could be like Auburn, Millbury, [suburban towns] or just like a smaller town.

Margaret's minimal sense of local identity and home is accompanied by few emotional attachments to Worcester. She assumes she will move out of her folks' house “some day—it would be fun”; and if she were to share an apartment, she “probably wouldn't get one in Worcester.” What is most striking, however, is that community mobility or stability has relatively little significance to her. With little awareness of Worcester as a distinct locale and few emotional ties to place, community mobility becomes a simple matter of personal preference:

I think that's really personal [whether it's better to be stable or move during one's life]. What's best for me wouldn't be best for the person next door. I mean, right now living in Worcester is best for me as that is where I am. I don't think one thing is better than another. Whatever makes you happy is best.

### *Place Relativity*

John is a highly educated, articulate professional, now in his thirties. He lives with his wife and young son in a two-family house, which they own. Like Margaret and Ann, he was raised in Worcester, but he subsequently lived in a variety of communities before recently returning to Worcester. This mobility, combined with his status as a homecomer, gives his sense of place unusual complexity in both belief and sentiment. What is particularly notable is the

"relativity" with which he holds and experiences his relation to community. John is highly conscious of places and believes they influence his life and identity; yet, he articulates few emotional ties to Worcester.

John's descriptions of Worcester are remarkable for their complexity and ambivalence. Most strikingly, because of his mobility and status as a home-comer, he portrays Worcester from both a local and a comparative perspective. At the same time, his characterizations vacillate, sometimes critical, sometimes warmly appreciative:

When I used to describe Worcester before I came back, my description of Worcester was a place that you either leave as soon as you can or you never leave. That describes a lot about Worcester. . . . It has a lot of people, but it's a small town. A big percentage of the people here have never gone anywhere else. Maybe they've gone to Cape Cod or Maine for a vacation, that's it. My sister, for instance, has never gone to New York City. . . . So I think Worcester is a small town, and people who live here feel the way that they live is ordained by God, and there's no reason to look anywhere else.

In addition to that right now there is a lot of growth in a lot of different ways. There's a lot of building going on, more people coming to Worcester 'cause of various industries. People come through for college and some stay. . . . It's becoming a much more interesting town, better restaurants to go to, and it's become easier to travel places, to the airport. It's growing.

John regards Worcester as home, but he does so with little sense of commitment and necessity:

I consider Worcester my home, but I must say that any place I've lived for any length of time I've considered home. When I came home from Edinburgh, for instance, I felt I was leaving home. Once I had been here for a while I felt like this was home. When I was living in Cambridge, since I spent so many years there, maybe 10 or 12, I felt like that was home. And when I go back there I have nostalgia for it so I would say that any place that I'm in for any length of time—long enough to have friends and habits of where I spend my time and so forth, I do really consider home. Right now it's Worcester.

This mobility of the self—of being able to transform a new locale into a significance space of home—reflects, in all probability, real place skills. Home is important to John, but it is something to cultivate in varied locales, not a quality of any particular place:

Home is a combination of things. One thing is people. When I was living in Edinburgh, I had friends here and there. I think another thing is the "everydayness" of where you are. You really feel like getting up in the morning; you are well oriented geographically, as well as in terms of people. So that there's a certain comfort involved, like a support, almost. I think that's what I build up when I go to a place, and therefore that becomes home.

John's ambivalence about Worcester, the complex meanings that it has for him, are also reflected in his sense of local identity. More than any other respondent, John sees himself as a "Worcesterite," but this self-awareness is grounded in the perspective of the "outsider." He is a Worcesterite in spite of himself:

I grew up here. I feel I'm a Worcesterite. Like sometimes I'm an American, if I'm abroad: you are whether you want to be or not. I am, I can't escape it. . . . It's the negative things about Worcester that I totally haven't gotten rid of, like the provincial small-mindedness that they don't think anything exists outside of Worcester. If I get together with my family, we get into those conversations, and I find myself repeating those old patterns. . . . But I sort of have an ironic view of myself: I stand back and look at myself and say, "You're doing it again."

His self-reflective awareness, his ambivalences about the limits of Worcester, and his sense of the mobility of "home" mean that John also sees stability and emotional attachment to community with ambivalence at best. Unlike Ann, Alan, and Barbara, he speaks of the virtues of community mobility:

In terms of moving to different parts of the country, or outside the country, I'm very strongly in favor of that. . . . You experience a wider range of human possibility, meaning the way people spend their time and what they talk and think about. I think that's enrichment. I have a certain romantic admiration for the farmer who spends all of his life in a rural area and never really gets out of it and has an appreciation for his surroundings. But I prefer the harmony of reconciling opposites to that of simplicity. . . . There's one woman who lives in a house about four houses up. She was born in that house and I think her mother was born in that house. That blows my mind! But to me that is the Worcester syndrome taken to an extreme. I'd rather have it the other way.

#### RESEARCHING COMMUNITY SENTIMENT: NEW DIRECTIONS

Although Ann, Alan, Barbara, Margaret, and John all reside in the same city, their feelings about this community are remarkably different. Ann feels at home in a community she interprets in biographical terms and mostly takes for granted. Alan actively affirms his commitment to Worcester and urban life within a highly conscious, comparative, and favorable perspective on cities and urban life. Barbara feels profoundly estranged from a city she finds dirty, hostile, provincial, uncreative, and lacking in community spirit. Margaret expresses few emotions about Worcester, for the city in which she resides has little personal or public meaning. John, the well-traveled homecomer, expresses complex, self-conscious, and ambivalent feelings about the city, a community in which he feels at home but not emotionally invested.

Such radically different senses of place begin to mark out the complex ways that contemporary Americans feel about communities. Here, contrasts of ideological and everyday rootedness suggest that strong emotional attachment to community may take different forms: through self-conscious affiliation and the appropriation of public community identities as well as the crecive development of personal meanings in the local landscape. Here, contrasts of alienation and rootedness clarify how displacement is experienced not only as community dissatisfaction but as a sense of being out-of-place and an identification with other valued locales. Here, contrasts of placelessness and rootedness indicate that community belief and sentiment may be highly attenuated, so that local satisfaction, emotional attachment, and identity are as marginal to

some as they are significant to others. Here, contrasts of the relativism and rootedness suggest that some Americans may cultivate a feeling of home in a community without becoming emotionally tied to that locale.

Such radically different senses of place, when coupled with the insights of our interdisciplinary review, also suggest several fruitful directions for research on community sentiment in particular and sense of place more generally. With respect to the former, careful work is needed that addresses local sentiment in its multidimensional complexity. However important community satisfaction, the diversity of feelings expressed by such satisfied residents as Ann, Alan, Margaret, and John indicates just how little single measures of sentiment capture of people's diverse emotional experiences with locales. Such multidimensional research will require the development of new measures, capable of tapping people's sense of home and local identity in ways comparable to measures of community satisfaction and attachment.

At the same time, the intimate connection between local sentiment and people's conceptions of their community calls for new work sensitive to the importance and complexity of community perspectives. Studies of the relation of environmental perception and community satisfaction provide some insight in this matter, as do those few investigations that directly examine the relation of local knowledge and culture to community attachment and identity (Hummon, 1990; Hunter, 1975; Taylor *et al.*, 1984). Yet, little work exists that simultaneously addresses the full range of meanings that local communities can bear: those grounded in the personal experiences of biography, the shared life of local groups, and the cultural symbols of both local and national culture. Here, particularly, work is needed that explores the way the built environment, as a nonverbal, symbolic medium, can serve to communicate and store such varied meanings for local residents. Such understanding will help to clarify how individuals interpret their environment, at once imbuing the local landscape with personal meaning and reading it for shared public significance.

As we gain insight into the distinct ways that sentiment and belief combine to form distinct local senses of place, these place orientations—of rootedness, alienation, relativity, and placelessness—will themselves need to be interpreted in light of the community as built, social, and ecological context. Though many approaches to this task are certainly worthwhile, three directions seem most pressing. First, the radically different place orientations voiced by Ann, Alan, Barbara, Margaret, and John underline the significance of intra-community variation in sense of place. Careful documentation of such variation, based on a representative sample of community residents, would be useful both to estimate the relative frequency of such orientations and to interpret their sources in the social and built environment. In light of research on community sentiment, such intracommunity variation in sense of place may well be understood in terms of individual differences in social integration and access to quality housing and neighborhood environments.

Second, intercommunity differences in local sentiment, particularly those associated with community satisfaction and local identity, suggest that comparative research across communities would be useful to understanding place

orientations. The broad social ecology of community life—involving differences in community size, type, density, heterogeneity, and rate of growth and decline—may well produce varied patterns of place orientations across communities. Other structural differences, notably those of race and class, may also exist for sense of place, again cross-cutting the dynamics of individual participation in the local community.

Finally, much evidence indicates that community mobility is intimately tied to individual variation in local sense of place. As Barbara's community alienation and John's community relativity suggest, such mobility may influence local sense of place by making community perspectives comparative and complex. As work on local attachment and identity demonstrates, mobility may weaken local sentiment by disrupting local social integration and eroding the personal meanings of the built environment. To trace these and other processes, individuals need to be compared with different mobility experiences. Here, sense of place may well be influenced in complex ways: by the frequency of mobility, the conditions of mobility (voluntary and constrained moves), the timing of mobility in terms of life stages (e.g., retirement), and the patterns of mobility (e.g., homecoming). Such factors, when combined with interpretations of intra- and intercommunity variation in sense of place, will provide an integrated understanding of community belief and sentiment.

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# Disruptions in Place Attachment

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A study of disruptions in psychological processes can provide unique insight into their predisruption functioning as well as the disruptions themselves and their consequences. Place attachment processes normally reflect the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional embeddedness individuals experience in their sociophysical environments. An examination of disruptions in place attachments demonstrate how fundamental they are to the experience and meaning of everyday life. After the development of secure place attachments, the loss of normal attachments creates a stressful period of disruption followed by a postdisruption phase of coping with lost attachments and creating new ones. These three phases of the disruption process are examined with respect to disruptions due to burglaries, voluntary relocations, and disasters, with special attention to the Buffalo Creek, West Virginia, flood and the Yungay, Peru, landslide. Underlying the diversity of disruptions, dialectic themes of stability–change and individuality–communality provide a coherent framework for understanding the temporal phases of attachment and its disruption.

## A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A study of disruptions of place attachments starts with an understanding of place attachment itself. By reflecting on a representative range of definitions

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for place attachment or related terms (see Table 1) as well as empirical assessments of disruptions, working assumptions about place attachments are developed and applied to a review of selected disruptions.

1. *Place attachments are integral to self-definitions, including individual and communal aspects of identity; disruptions threaten self-definitions.* Many definitions assert that attachments provide anchors in life, orienting individuals to who they are (see definitions 3, 5, and 9, Table 1) or "incarnating the experience and aspirations of people" (definition 9; see also 1, 7, and 10).

Physical settings and artifacts both reflect and shape people's understanding of who they are as individuals and as members of groups. In the United States, a very individualistic society, homes are often personalized to be and look unique. Personal and familial identities are projected by landscaping, house style, materials and colors, furnishings, and alterations to homes. Nevertheless, many features of home and community environments also reveal more communally based identities. Through both individual efforts and community standards, features such as home style and colors, legislated setbacks, lawn care and landscaping project one's adherence to communal values. Conversely, even in more communitarian cultures where conformity is the norm, there are still ways in which individuality is expressed (see Gauvain, Altman, & Fahim, 1983).

Negotiating one's place in society requires both individual and communal aspects of identity. Indeed, these processes can be described as dialectic processes, wherein oppositions coexist, with neither pole dominating completely, but the combination and connection between the two creating a unified experience that changes over time. Any individual is connected to multiple groups, as a parent, a sibling, neighbor, fellow resident of a town, etc. At times, individuals struggle with tensions between communal and individualistic obligations, trying to maintain all aspects of their identity. Places, especially homes and neighborhoods, are essential actors in this tension, providing places for certain groups to interact, creating barriers between others. Places become part and parcel of these identities, but in a very subtle way. When place attachments are disrupted, individuals struggle to define their losses in order to identify what types of connections will provide them with a meaningful relationship to the world. Some see the bonds of attachment as "limited and replaceable with ties elsewhere" (Fischer *et al.*, 1977, p. 184). We agree with others (Guiliani, 1989) who note that attachments involve unique and nonrepeatable events in the lives of individuals and groups; when rebuilding a network of people and places old attachments are not literally replaced.

2. *Place attachments provide stability and change; disruptions threaten to overwhelm humans with change.*

Place attachments clearly promote and reflect stability, signifying long-term bonds between people and their homes and communities. Many definitions assert that attachment involves processes such as familiarity, stability, and security, that develop over fairly long time spans (see definitions 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). When attachment is described as taken for granted, that implies a certain degree of stability, predictability, and order in knowing what to expect

TABLE 1. DEFINITIONS OF PLACE ATTACHMENT AND DISRUPTIONS

1. *Disruptions*: "Any severe loss may represent a disruption in one's relationship to the past, to the present, and to the future. Losses generally bring about fragmentation of routines, of relationships, and of expectations, and frequently imply an alteration in the world of physically available objects and spatially oriented action. It is a disruption in the sense of continuity which is ordinarily a taken-for-granted framework for functioning in a universe which has temporal, social, and spatial dimensions. . . . the loss of an important place represents a change in a potentially significant component of the experience of continuity" (Fried, 1963, p. 232).
2. *Topophilia* "can be defined broadly to include all of the human being's affective ties with the material environment" (Tuan, 1974, p. 93). "Topophilia takes many forms and varies greatly in emotional range and intensity. . . . [It includes] the fondness for place because it evokes pride of ownership or of creation" (p. 247).
3. *Attachment*: "individuals' commitment to their neighborhood and their neighbors" (Fischer *et al.*, 1977, p. 139). Commitment includes social involvement and subjective feelings. Attachment develops through a cost-benefit analysis whereby people compare their own neighborhood with a small set of available alternatives. Neighborhood attachment includes institutional ties, involvement, social contacts, and positive feelings.
4. *Place dependence*: one's "perceived strength of association between him or herself and specific places" (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981, p. 457).
5. *Place identity*: "clusters of positively and negatively valenced cognitions of physical settings . . . [that] help to define who and of what value the person is both to himself and in terms of how he thinks of others" (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983, p. 74). . . . [The cognitions] "evolve through . . . selective engagement . . . on both a conscious and unconscious level" (p. 62).
6. Attachment can be viewed as a multilevel person-place bond that evolves from specifiable conditions of place and characteristics of people" (Shumaker & Taylor, 1983, p. 223). It is "a positive affective bond" (p. 233). Attachments involve "cognitions of satisfaction and expectations of stability, feelings of positive affect, greater knowledge of the locale, and behaviors that serve to maintain or enhance the location. . . . When the total balance within this system is positive, the person is attached; when it goes negative [the person is] detached or alienated" (p. 237).
7. "Place . . . means permanence, security, nourishment, a center or organizing principle" (Cochrane, 1987, p. 11). . . . "place is currently understood less as a physical location than a deeply affective characterization crystallized from an individual's emotions, experience and cultural background." [There is a] "reciprocal relationship between individuals and place, an interlocking system in which the people and place define one another" (p. 7).
8. [Attachments involve] "four significant neighborhood domains: *The ways personal needs are met, their location and distribution over space, the role of affiliations to others in the area, and the temporal patterns* of each one. All of these contribute to the formation of an ecological niche, a safe haven within a place. How this occurs is important to understanding connection to places" (Rivlin, 1987, pp. 12-14).
9. "Place is seen as a centre of felt value, incarnating the experience and aspirations of people. Thus it is not only an arena for everyday life . . . [it also] provides *meaning* to that life. To be attached to a place is seen as a fundamental human need and, particularly as home, as the foundation of our selves and our identities. Places are thus conceived as profound centres of human existence. As such, they can provide not only a sense of well-being but also one of entrapment and drudgery. To be tied to one place may well enmesh a person in the familiar and routine" (Eyles, 1989, p. 109).

(continued)

TABLE 1. (Continued)

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10. "These bonds are developed through long-term, focused involvement in a residential setting. Through the purposeful and satisfying concentration of the multiple routines of daily life in a geographic location, the residential environ is . . . imbued with positive affect. The home environ becomes a unique place of familiar, known, and predictable activities, people, and physical elements; a focal point of one's experiential space. Psychological bonds with home places are most often unconscious or taken-for-granted experiences of bodily orientation in the physical environs of one's home as well as an intimate sense of embeddedness, belonging, comfort, at ease, and security in this locale" (Feldman, 1990, pp. 187–188).

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from the environment. In stable circumstances a deep embeddedness can be beneficial by providing a stable sense of self in connection with environment.

Yet, place attachments are not static either; they change in accordance with changes in the people, activities or processes, and places involved in the attachments. They are nurtured through continuing series of events that reaffirm humans' relations with their environments. Housing renovation is an example of an activity that changes the environment, yet can still maintain and enhance one's attachment to place. If people fail to make the changes in their environment that provide support for their desired identities and goals, then attachment can erode. Thus, attachments are responsive to human aspirations and experiences (definition 9). Individuals often anticipate and expect changes in life circumstances in such a way that place attachments adjust automatically or with minimal disruption. Severe disruptions occur when the changes become so great that humans must work hard to define the thread of continuity or stability in life; at times, change may feel overwhelming.

In combination, the dialectic themes show how ties to places are integral to the fundamental human tasks of determining individual and group identity and achieving a mixture of stability and change. A dialectic analysis avoids prescribing an ideal mix of individuality–communality or stability–change, but it is clear that not all mixtures are viable. There may be zones of healthy interdependence between dialectic oppositions. Too much stability prevents development; excessive or uncontrolled change creates chaos. An overreliance on the community may lead to a state of dependency, whereas too much individualism can be isolating.

3. *Place attachments are holistic, multifaceted, and include several levels of environmental scale; disruptions must be examined for their holistic, multifaceted, and multiscale aspects.*

*Place attachments are holistic.* Some definitions reflect the assumption that human experience is integrally related to place and involves a holistic and ongoing blend of people, processes, and places (elements of a transactional worldview; see Altman & Rogoff, 1987). In such cases of profound attachments to place (variously called "existential insideness," Relph, 1975; or "rootedness," Tuan, 1974), places are experienced as an extension of the self. Such attachments arise naturally in the context of daily experience, often without con-

scious intent (see definitions 1, 5, and 10). In contrast is the view that human experience is separable from context. As distinct and objective observers of settings, humans engage in rational economic analyses of places, are able to specify the costs and benefits of bonds to places, and are willing to trade off one place for another when the benefits dictate (definitions 3 and 6).

Both views of human nature are valuable, but the first view is more in keeping with accounts of individuals experiencing severe disruptions in place. A common observation of those who survive disasters is that the disaster made them realize how they had taken the provisions of places for granted. In the daily course of life, the holistic experience of people and places creates a tangible reality to undergird many abstract values, self-definitions, and understandings. In such cases, any listing of the costs and benefits of a place prior to its disruption would be misleading, as individuals underestimate the extent to which place is bound up with daily experiences of self and others. Indeed, the more economic analyses of place attachments arise from scholars explaining voluntary mobility within a stable societal context. In these cases, it is likely that a cost-benefit approach will capture the essential differences between places, even if it is insensitive to the similarities between places. In contrast, disasters may reveal that humans never articulated all of the benefits of a place, that taken-for-granted benefits are appreciated only in retrospect.

Because place attachments operate in the background of awareness, it is difficult to assess them. Although the shock of disruption helps to clarify what has been disrupted, investigators often rely on other methodological tools that can reveal unstated assumptions underlying behaviors. Open-ended exploratory interviews or careful analysis of the symbolic functions of environment can help draw out the meaning and experience of attachment (Cochrane, 1987; Oliver-Smith, 1986) and of its disruption (Anthony, 1984; Fried, 1963). In sum, the holistic nature of truly profound attachments means that they are only fully recognized when they have been disrupted. Even then, scientists need to use a method that will enable individuals to process and articulate their losses.

*Place attachments are multifaceted.* We concur with definitions that describe attachments as multifaceted, involving behavior, cognition, and affect (see definitions 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). Attachment processes involve celebrations, routines, personalizations, and creations of environments that serve to cultivate individual, family, and community identities.

Many emphasize that attachments especially involve emotional or affective bonds (see 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). The positive nature of attachment may simply reflect that attachments provide a reassuring and known place in the world that facilitates functioning. But the substance of one's attachments may include negative elements, such as entrenchment in a lower-class status (Fried, 1963; Oliver-Smith, 1986) or feelings of drudgery that may accompany routines (see 9 or 4, "place dependence"). More typically, place attachments provide a wider range of positive experiences, such as security, self-esteem, a sense of belonging, etc. We will reserve other terms, like *detached* or *alienated*, to describe instances when positive bonds have not been developed or maintained.

*Place attachments occur at both individual and communal levels.* In terms of

physical scale, some state that attachments are to particular places (definition 4), often homes (9), neighborhoods (3 and 8), or residential settings (6 and 10), while others leave the places unspecified (2, 5, and 7). Similarly, different aggregates of people (e.g., individuals, families, neighbors) may be involved in its creation and, after disruption, its re-creation. We agree that the geographical boundaries of place attachments may be vague but that they involve bonds that are important for individual or group identities.

More generally, issues of environmental (and temporal) scale serve to distinguish place attachment from the related concept of territoriality. Both concepts involve individuals and groups, physical and social qualities of places, and can yield negative effects when disrupted. But attachment may be less spatially delimited than territoriality (Taylor, 1988). For example, attachments to a "hometown" may represent generalized experiences from a variety of specific settings, many of which might not be defended in and of themselves as one would defend a territory. We also do not consider all affective ties to places to constitute attachment, as some arise from symbols experienced only fleetingly or indirectly (e.g., feelings of sentimentality toward the Statue of Liberty). Similarly, attachments involve enduring ties, whereas some territories operate and are defended immediately (Taylor, 1988). Thus, this chapter focuses on important and enduring places, such as homes and neighborhoods, where territoriality and place attachment overlap substantially.

*4. Disruptions can be understood by examining their individuality–communality and stability–change functions over predisruption, disruption, and postdisruption phases.*

Based on the foregoing discussion, the following definition of place attachment and disruption is offered:

Place attachment involves positively experienced bonds, sometimes occurring without awareness, that are developed over time from the behavioral, affective, and cognitive ties between individuals and/or groups and their sociophysical environment. These bonds provide a framework for both individual and communal aspects of identity and have both stabilizing and dynamic features. The environments may include homes or communities, places that are important and directly experienced but which may not have easily specified boundaries. Predominately negative connections to place characterize failed attachments, which may be experienced as alienation. Transformations in place attachment occur whenever the people, places, or psychological processes change over time. Disruptions of place attachment are noticeable transformations in place attachment due to noticeable changes in the people, processes, or places.

This definition frames the concept of disruption broadly, giving equal potential to places, processes, or people as instigators of disruptions. However, the research literature is more complete with respect to disruptions of places, so that emphasis will be reflected in this chapter.

Place attachments develop slowly but can be disrupted quickly and can create a long-term phase of dealing with the loss and repairing or re-creating attachments to people and places. These three phases are interdependent, as qualities of the initial attachment or disruption can ease or exacerbate the stress

of loss and the difficulty of re-creating attachments. As will be illustrated below, much of the challenge facing those with disruptions in place attachment is to negotiate a reconciliation between the past that has been lost and a future that is both desirable and meaningful. Certain aspects of predisruption attachment may forecast the extent and severity of the disruption and the availability and effectiveness of coping mechanisms. Instead of making causal claims, we will simply point out discernible patterns across the phases of disruption.

## DISRUPTIONS TO ATTACHMENT VIA CHANGES IN PLACE PROCESSES

### BURGLARY AS A DISRUPTION TO PROCESSES

Although we defined disruption as instigated by salient changes in people or processes, we will focus on residential burglary as the one example of disruption of the customary processes involving home. Normally homes provide a secure and private place where one's identity is protected. Even in objectively dangerous neighborhoods, many residents are biased toward feeling safer in the immediate home area than in more distant parts of the neighborhood (Merry, 1981). Burglars exploit residents' tendencies to take home security for granted by entering through an unlocked door or window in 43% of the U.S. home burglaries (see Brown, 1985, for a review).

The typical safety and security associated with home invites residents to develop strong attachments to home. Homes become the site of strong and reassuring temporal rhythms and markers involving both stability and change. Daily routines of coming and going, when completed safely, reinforce feelings that home is a secure anchor. Seasonal changes are often marked by communal holidays, with festive displays that reflect and sustain identity (Caplow, 1984). These displays link to and may enhance residents' feelings of cohesion with their neighbors (Brown & Werner, 1985). The home, especially the interior, contains personalizations and objects that signify relationships, past events, personal achievements, values, and pleasures that help to define individual and communal aspects of the self (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). In sum, the home often works as an extension of its dwellers—reflecting changes within stability, revealing communal and personal identities.

Victims' emotional reactions to burglary, noted in several Western countries (see Brown & Harris, 1989, for a review), provide psychological evidence of residents' experience of disruption. These reactions include feelings of anger, shock or disbelief, and fear. Some victims report effects that linger months after the burglary, including fear of entering the home, of being alone, or of the burglar's return. These emotions reveal how many victims have been caught off guard, mistakenly assuming that home is a safe extension of self that is both stable and under the resident's control.

The severity of victims' aversive reactions reflected the severity of the disruption. More severe disruptions of security and control were indexed as those involving a large number of rooms entered and the presence of property

damage/disarrangement. In these types of burglaries, victims experienced a wider range of aversive emotional reactions and a greater distrust of the police. This suggests that more salient violations of the home's normal provisions elicit a greater sense of disruption.

Bonds to the community and neighborhood were also disrupted. When the burglary was more salient, victims reported a greater distrust of the police. Finally, when the burglary involved a large number of rooms entered and the presence of disarranged property, victims felt less neighborhood security. Even though burglary does not directly involve neighbors, a victim's belief that the neighborhood is familiar and safe is eroded.

Burglary also violates customary forms of identity display, which are important supports of individual and family identity. Families usually extend invitations into the home only to kin and close friends; thus, the personalizations of the home that convey the more private features of family identity are usually shown only by invitation. The burglary changed all of that—now a potential stranger has not only entered the home and stolen from it, the burglar also has intimate and unreciprocated knowledge about the household. This reversal of the ways in which homes normally defend and preserve a family's customary forms of identity display provides the symbolic insult that accompanies the property crime.

Although society provides no symbolic means of reestablishing place attachments in the wake of disruptions created by burglary, police may in fact use evidence processing as a "negative rite," a way of allowing victims to mark and come to terms with their loss. Police elect to dust for fingerprints after a crime (Stenross, 1984) when the homeowner lost special possessions, such as silver or jewelry, that may have had sentimental as well as monetary value. Similarly, dusting for prints was more likely after forced entries, which the author believed involved greater insults to residents' sense of security. These predictors attained significance even when more traditional predictors of police response (i.e., dollar value of loss, the presence of leads pointing to a particular suspect, victim's race and insurance coverage) had already been taken into account. Even though the fingerprinting procedures cannot themselves restore the victim's attachments, at least they provide symbolic gestures that attest to the victim's loss. Additional research is needed to determine whether these procedures facilitate the reestablishment of place attachments.

In sum, burglary disrupts victims' assumptions concerning the meaning of places intrinsic to their identities as individuals, family members, and neighbors. Reactions, by both victims and the police, correspond to the degree to which the disruption threatens a household's ability to identify with their home and neighborhood—to believe them to be stable and supportive features of the world. Burglary, like other disruptions, alerts residents to the fact that they felt greater security in their homes and neighborhoods than was warranted. Because attachments involve people, places, and the processes underlying people-place bonds, burglary represents a direct disruption of the bonding processes. The next section addresses disruptions instigated by a change in the place itself.



## DISRUPTIONS TO ATTACHMENT VIA CHANGES IN PLACES

Geographic relocations clearly represent a disruption of place; yet most studies of relocation have given short shrift to the disruption of place attachments. Although there has been a long tradition of seeking links between relocation and outcome variables such as health or academic performance, there has been less attention directed to the psychological experiences of the loss of one place and the cultivation of attachments to a new place. The following relocations, chosen to illustrate the process of disruption in a variety of cultural settings, are representative of a range of circumstances for the move, including voluntary and forced migration.

## VOLUNTARY RELOCATION

Sociologists debate how residential mobility relates to a sense of community. Some contend that mobility involves individualistic gains, such as improved status and economic well-being, at the cost of communal losses, such as uprooting and alienating humans from societal claims on their behavior (Fried, 1963; Packard, 1972). Others argue that mobility provided by technology allows spatially unrestricted and satisfying communities. Personal choice replaces spatial constraint as the basis for determining friends, residences, and activities (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Webber, 1970). Place attachment scholarship could broaden both arguments by focusing on the nature of losses involved in disruptions to place attachments.

*Predisruption Phase*

Voluntary relocations are often planned (e.g., going to college, company transfers, retirement), and can accompany positive (e.g., job transfer, marriage) or negative (e.g., divorce, widowhood) status changes, and/or normative changes (e.g., leaving home, getting married). Anticipated voluntary moves allow individuals to experience the transition in a gradual fashion and to prepare for accompanying changes in individual and communal identity. Thus, people work at creating stability within the change and prepare both for leaving and for beginning new individual and communal aspects of identity.

*Loosening Attachments and Obligations to the Former Home.* Research by Wapner and colleagues (Wofsey, Rierdan, & Wapner, 1979) has explored how graduating college seniors loosen their emotional and cognitive connections with a place when they have firm plans for their future. Across three small studies, students with well-articulated plans experiences more of an affective and cognitive "distance" from college, as evidenced by both their verbal descriptions and cognitive maps. These students described the campus in factual terms and drew objective features from aerial views, while students without firm plans drew familiar details, closeup views, and people. Thus, when an impending relocation becomes "real," students show some loosening of connections to the current residence.

Well-adjusted high school seniors have also reported more active ways of tying up loose ends and reducing their obligations to family and friends when anticipating relocation to college (e.g., completing home repairs; Coelho, Hamburg, & Murphy, 1976). Leave-taking celebrations, such as going-away parties, can involve farewells to old friends, promises to keep in touch after the move, and forecasts of a happy resolution of the move. Through both distancing and strengthening connections to past life, such preparations assure some continuity of community and allow place attachments to be loosened in a gradual fashion, imposing some stability on what could otherwise be an abrupt change.

*Anticipating and Connecting with a New Life.* In the same study of college-bound students (Coelho *et al.*, 1976), some coped by reminding themselves of previous experiences at summer camp or with sharing bedrooms to assure themselves that the move would be manageable, or in our terms, that there is continuity in the face of change. In addition, some practiced their anticipated postrelocation lifestyle before the move, learning independent living skills needed in college. Others wrote to their assigned roommates and gathered information about the college area. Thus, the development of a new identity is started prior to the move itself.

In sum, although research on the preparation for relocation is sparse, it suggests that advance efforts to start relinquishing old ties and anticipating or developing new ties and identities will help reduce the disruption. Furthermore, these efforts involve cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes that serve to reaffirm some and relinquish other aspects of former attachments.

### *Disruption*

Most scholars agree that relocation involves short-term disruptions that can be stressful. Although a fairly frequent event, with one in five moving yearly (Fischer *et al.*, 1977), U.S. samples have rated relocation as a fairly stressful event (Holmes & Rahe, 1965). Nevertheless, there are ways of experiencing the move that make it more manageable.

*Choosing and Liking the Move.* Stokols, Shumaker, and Martinez (1983) found that when individuals do not believe they are the type of people who enjoy the change of moving or when they do not perceive the move to be completely voluntary, they are more likely to experience health problems than other relocators. So even among nominally "voluntary" movers, there are differences in the degree to which relocation is experienced as voluntary. Families may pressure adolescents to go to college, widows may move to prevent economic constraints, or parents may not consult the children when deciding to move. The perceived voluntariness of the move may therefore reflect the degree to which individuals desire and are prepared for a change in attachments. Sometimes a relocation may support a new or desired identity. Voluntary moves may also enable those who were detached or alienated to move to settings where more positive attachments can be cultivated. To the extent that voluntary moves can be anticipated and planned, individuals may actively

loosen old ties and begin new ones in order to lessen the abruptness of the change.

### *Postdisruption*

*Homesickness.* Students' memories of their favorite homes reveal intense longings, even for places left years ago (Anthony, 1984). Many described the move as ending a phase of life, recognizing that identity changes with relocation; others remembered their emotional resistance to the move and feeling "heartsick," "betrayed," and "numb."

The feelings that focus on loss of place and people are often called homesickness. Brown (1987a) found that feelings of homesickness among college freshmen are frequently experienced, change in intensity over time, are multifaceted, and include missing family, friends, and places and feeling a sense of disrupted identity. Few students were severely homesick, but many showed some degree of homesickness, a finding confirmed by British researchers using different measures and a variety of age groups (Fisher, Frazer, & Murray, 1986; Fisher, Murray, & Frazer, 1985). In the U.S. research, students reported most homesickness for family and friends. This type of homesickness, as well as feelings of identity disruption, increased over the first semester but decreased during the second semester. Finally, a feeling of missing the physical environment of the hometown increased across time so that it was most severe 7 months after relocation. These temporal trends indicate that homesickness does not peak immediately after relocation, perhaps because of the distractions and novelty of the move itself. Later, as they attempt some meaningful sense of connection with the new environment, feelings about home may serve as reminders of lost but valued aspects of life.

In addition, this study examined whether homesickness might reflect dissatisfaction with social support in the new environment (Brown, 1987b). In general, homesickness is not simply a reaction to poor relationships in the new social milieu, a finding that has been independently corroborated (Fisher *et al.*, 1985). Ties to new environments are not easy replacements for what was left behind. Certainly family members cannot be replaced and, although new friendships may be developed, they are not literal replacements for old friendships. Students still miss old friends regardless of their satisfaction with new friendships. In sum, even voluntary relocatees feel that part of their identity derived from the people and places left behind.

*Maintaining Ties to the Former Home.* Sometimes relocators cope by maintaining attachments to the old home, as Yoruba Ibadan migrants did after moving from rural areas to the city for jobs (Chokor, 1988). Although satisfied with the modern functional conveniences of their new city homes, ties to their villages were maintained and extensively cultivated. Many migrants travelled back to the home villages for special events, contributed money for economic development in home areas, and chose spouses from the hometown region. Even after extended stays in their new homes, most believed they would return to their "true homes" some day. However, this strategy of living in one

house while attached to a different and distant home may be rare. When California students visited a favorite home they had moved from, many reacted with anger or sadness that *their* home had been changed and ruined (Anthony, 1984). Consequently, the strategy of maintaining old ties may only work if migrants are welcomed back and if the place or the people associated with home remains stable.

*Becoming Identified with the New Place.* Active efforts to display individual and communal identities in new places may also ease the transition. In a study of college freshman (Vinsel, Brown, Altman, & Foss, 1980), it was found that most personalized their rooms fairly early in the year. Thus, assigning meaning and symbolic significance to a new place is a common response among relocatees.

Furthermore, early warning signs of the future dropout were apparent in the type of decorations on freshman walls. The walls of students who dropped out by the end of the second year had more decorations that looked like reminders of the old hometown—pictures from high school, art work by siblings, hometown slogans or insignia. Although most students had some of these symbolic reminders of the former home, the dropouts were likely to have greater numbers of them. Similarly, it looked as if the dropouts were having more difficulty finding meaningful ties in the new university setting. The dropouts were less likely to have decorations showing investment in and commitment to people, places, and activities in the new environment. These personalizations could include club insignia, class announcements, or posters from local recreation spots. Students who chose to leave college had many symbols of attachment to the hometown, few to the new environment, and showed a narrower range of interests and activities in the new setting.

In sum, managing voluntary relocations begins prior to the move itself as individuals prepare for and come to terms with leaving. The disruption itself is likely to involve some stress, but the negative feelings accompanying relocation underscore the value, meaning, and usefulness of previous involvement with places and people. Feelings of homesickness or longing for old places and people reveal the extent to which relocators were interconnected with those settings. They also may allow individuals to reflect on their losses in order to clarify what qualities of places or people are worth seeking in the new setting. This search for new attachments must be done in a flexible manner because both old and new ties represent irreplaceable commitments, stemming from nonrepeatable events in the life course of attachments to people and places.

### INVOLUNTARY RELOCATIONS

Involuntary relocations often follow natural forces, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, drought or flood, or human actions, such as toxic contaminations, or economic development initiatives such as dam or highway building or urban renewal projects. These relocations are often sudden, with change threatening to overwhelm stability. They can involve injury or loss of life and possessions, losses that are integral to self-definitions. In fact, the following discussions of

two particular disasters will illustrate how places sustain multiple sources of identity, including kin, friends, and neighbors; institutions and cultural structures; and meaningful behavior settings tied to work, leisure, and celebration.

### *The Buffalo Creek Flood*

In 1972, a dam on Buffalo Creek collapsed causing a flood that killed 125 people and destroyed 1,000 homes, leaving 4,000 people from 16 small Appalachian communities homeless. Accounts of the tragedy are drawn from Stern (1976), the lawyer representing residents against the mining company that had built the dam, and Erikson (1976), the sociologist who documented the social and psychological aftermath for the lawsuit. Although because of the lawsuit some have questioned residents' accounts of losses (Dynes, Billings, & Maggard, 1978), government mental health workers corroborated the severe psychiatric impact of the flood, independently of the lawsuit and for residents not involved in the lawsuit (Stern, 1976). Similarly, as the lawsuit did not focus on place attachment, there was no reason to distort accounts of disruption in place attachments.

*Predisaster Attachment.* Families along Buffalo Creek were knit tightly together in the face of the chronic problems of poverty and the dangers of mining life. Community life was focused locally on informal neighboring relationships within each narrow village along the creek, with few formal organizations beyond the church. Because the region was fairly isolated from national trends toward socioeconomic progress, the community was an important source of civic and cultural pride, although this reflected common circumstance more than common action.

*The Nature of the Disruption.* The severity and capriciousness of the flood violated residents' assumptions about the world. Homes, formerly understood as bastions of safety, became weapons, trapping some neighbors in the flood, dismembering others. Death, although an acceptable risk for miners, struck mostly women and children, who were supposed to be exempt from danger. Survivors also had to reconcile their religious belief that justice comes to the righteous with the fact that many flood victims were devoutly religious. Finally, the course of the flood itself seemed random, as it rolled from bank to bank, taking out a cluster of homes here, sparing a cluster there.

*Postdisaster Disruptions.* Outsiders brought in the machinery, work crews, and bureaucratic sources of relief, leaving residents as passive onlookers to the recovery. Most survivors did not participate in a class action lawsuit brought against the mining company that had built the dam but settled individually for small but immediate financial compensations. Even lawsuit participants did not act as a support group for one another but remained passively "litigized" as lawyers pressed their claims.

Perhaps in part because of their lack of meaningful or efficacious involvement in recovery, victims were severely traumatized. A state-employed psychologist first noted the "Buffalo Creek syndrome," a form of posttraumatic stress disorder, that included "loss of appetite, sleeplessness, extreme fear,

and anxiety anytime it rains" (cited in Stern, 1976, p. 238). It led to widespread and persistent family problems and disabling character changes (Titchener & Kapp, 1976). One and a half years later, 93% of the 615 participants in the class action still had an identifiable emotional disorder (Erikson, 1976). Admittedly, our analysis is based on observations prior to the resolution of the lawsuit; any progress in adjustment beyond that time is not reflected in this account.

*Disruption and Stability-Change.* What happened to Buffalo Creek represents the two extremes of the stability-change dialectic. Prior to the disaster, place attachments arose from a fairly stable context, with long-established neighborhoods and homes inhabited by residents who could trace their local roots back several generations. The flood ripped this stable social and physical fabric of the community, leaving residents helpless and detached from the physical and social reconstruction of their community. Residents had drastic changes imposed on them first by the flood itself, then by the outside experts and authorities directing the relief efforts; residents themselves were not active initiators of or participants in change processes. Conversely, the lengthy legal and bureaucratic delays caught residents in a protracted limbo. Furthermore, residents could not hope to re-create their old community, as a new highway was planned that would split the town and destroy its rural isolation. None of these events provided residents with the stability associated with positive and self-affirming goals; thus, residents were alienated, unable to connect with their present or future.

*Disruption and Individuality-Communalinity.* With regard to their individuality, the loss of their homes stripped residents of the "furniture of self," according to Erikson. Many miners had put years of effort and scarce resources into transforming small company houses into homes that reflected their own skills and tastes. That investment was gone, along with all the family memorabilia. Several residents felt that their new permanent housing was of better quality than before, but that did not make it "home."

The emergency rehousing trailers proved a major obstacle to restoring personal, family, and community identity. For families, privacy suffered because "family quarrels could be heard five or six doors away, and such everyday sounds as bedsprings moving or glassware breaking or toilets flushing were broadcast" to neighbors (Erikson, 1976, p. 149). Normal patterns of sociability suffered, as trailers were too small for the kitchen tables and front porches that had been the locus of family activity. The metal roofs of the trailers also amplified the noise of rainstorms, which kept residents vigilant throughout rainy nights, fearful of new flooding.

For neighbors, losses were exacerbated by the trailer courts, which removed the physical supports for the former patterns of community sociability. Erikson describes the predisaster community as one ordered spatially rather than hierarchically along status lines or formally into organizations. But homeless families were assigned to trailer homes on a first come, first served basis instead of by previous location or social network. Lamenting the loss of their former neighbors, residents found it impossible to rekindle a sense of community after the random reshuffling of neighbors into trailer courts. In addition,

the crowded trailer court provided no adequate places for former patterns of outdoor neighborhood congregation or play. Exacerbated by the use of alcohol and other socially disapproved coping mechanisms, people came to view their trailer court neighbors as strangers who did not share their values, traditions, or understandings.

Formal organizations beyond the church were unpopular both before and after the flood. Relations with employers were also strained, as the largest employer—the mining company—had built the faulty dam and did not check on families after the flood. Some company officials told residents the flood was “an act of God,” which required no compensation. The mostly fundamentalist residents were forced to question either their faith or their long-time economic providers.

In the face of combined losses of support across individual, family, neighborhood, and community levels, residents could not be enlisted in a “conspiracy to make a perilous world seem safe” (Erikson, 1976, p. 240). The disaster had so seriously eroded residents’ supports to identity that they could not make any positive statements about who they were or where they were going.

### *The Yungay Landslide*

The next disaster illustrates how drastic changes do not inevitably overwhelm all semblance of stability, individuality, or communality. In 1970 an earthquake killed over 70,000 and left half a million homeless throughout Peru. In the small town of Yungay the quake sent a huge slab of glacial ice through the town, burying it under 5 meters of mud and killing all but 200 residents. Only the tops of four palm trees from the central square marked where the town had been. The primary account of the disaster was written by Oliver-Smith (1986), an anthropologist whose fieldwork in the community began prior to the disaster and who returned to record the survivors’ experiences; a secondary source was Bode (1989), an anthropologist who moved to a nearby village over a year after the disaster.

*Predisaster Attachment.* In Peru, “one’s birthplace is part of one’s identity” (Oliver-Smith, 1986, p. 52). Even those who had migrated to Lima still called themselves Yungainos and many joined Yungay-related migrant organizations. The livelihood and way of life for many Yungainos were strongly linked to the land; “a peasant who loses his land . . . may lose the traditional community-based sources of social and personal identity” (Oliver-Smith, 1986, p. 116). Immediately prior to the earthquake then, Yungainos were strongly attached to their land, proud of their community, and generally enjoyed a good quality of life.

*Postdisaster Disruptions.* The magnitude of the disaster and the isolation of the area created a period of postdisaster confusion, where normal and meaningful patterns of life were disrupted. Initially, the normal sense of property and individual ownership was lost as people shared whatever resources they had and formed households with other unrelated survivors. Traditional divisions of labor along gender lines were erased temporarily to get things done.

Because official aid efforts were delayed when outsiders did not know the extent of the devastation, self-help efforts were necessary for survival.

*Disruption and Stability-Change.* Within a few months, once physical survival was assured, residents struggled to come to terms with their losses and to re-create a sense of stability and a positive identity. Oliver-Smith (1986) describes how grieving sets up a conflict between "allegiance to the past and commitment to the present" (p. 185). This conflict is eventually resolved by "incorporating what was valuable in the past with new commitments to the present in a meaningful experience" (p. 185).

The grieving process involved remembering and valuing social and physical attachments lost in the landslide. This was facilitated, in part, by their proximity to the slide "scar," where survivors would gather to mourn and place crosses to honor the dead. They also grieved

for places and objects that no longer existed and for customs that were no longer viable in the camp's environment. The constant reminiscences about this chapel, that street, the little corner drug store, or a stroll in the plaza were ritual expressions of the value and significance of the lost past. (Oliver-Smith, 1986, p. 188)

Yungainos also used special ceremonial days to commemorate the past, including the traditionally celebrated day of the dead and new ceremonial day, the anniversary of the disaster. These ceremonies allowed residents to focus and contain their grief in a way that enhanced a sense of community while still allowing them to get on with a new life. The ceremonies also were a public spectacle, prompting government officials to hasten reconstruction efforts (Bode, 1989). One ceremony was specifically oriented to the future, when they planted the first palm tree for the new plaza to be built for the new Yungay. Thus, over time the survivors moved from focusing on the past to focusing on the future and selecting meanings from the past that were worthy of striving for in the future.

*Disruption and Individuality-Communality.* Ironically, the initial lack of aid may have benefited victims in the long run by forcing them to renew familiar household forms and to provide for their own survival, thus affirming some positive self-definitions. When aid efforts arrived they often threatened the identity and self-esteem of Yungainos. Donated clothing was often tattered and dirty, more appropriate to beggars than self-respecting individuals; donated food was foreign. Neckties or other inappropriate donations left residents feeling misunderstood yet resentfully dependent on outsiders.

The rehousing efforts also served to threaten a positive identity and self-esteem for many of the survivors, echoing problems at Buffalo Creek. Many wanted loans or grants to rebuild their own homes. Instead, authorities provided modular housing and determined house materials, form, and placement. Houses, crowded together and without water or electricity, did not fit survivors' customary ways of life. As one survivor complained, "We are not animals to be put in stables. These houses violate the privacy of the home and the sanctity of the family" (Oliver-Smith, 1986, p. 141).

A further problem was the distribution of the housing. Authorities dic-



tated egalitarian principles consistent with national political sentiments (Bode, 1989), which were counter to Yungay's existing social hierarchy. Prior to the disaster, lower-status Indians farmed on the surrounding hills, providing inexpensive labor and food for the elite, who lived in town. With the egalitarian distribution pattern, residents lost the supports for their former social hierarchy.

As heated as these problems were, the two groups agreed, for both economic and psychological reasons, that old Yungay should be rebuilt close by. But authorities planned to rebuild elsewhere, providing the external threat that rallied the residents to work together to create institutions, rituals, and symbols with which to advance their cause. Signs were painted, proclaiming the town to be the "new Yungay." The Catholic church created various victims' aid groups. Parents' associations sprang up to rebuild and reequip the local school. Citizens even took pride in the quick reestablishment of the soccer leagues. Although the plaza was destroyed, residents created and used new gathering places—in shops, on soccer fields, in the church, and by the gravesites on the scar itself.

Thus, stable values of the residents sparked their participation in changes designed to regain a tangible place suited to their values. In this way, activities provided a "sense of continuity, of consistency, and a resistance to the further alteration of the environment and society" (p. 213). Residents relied heavily on their broadly communal aspects of identity as Yungainos for the rebuilding; ethnic, family, and individual identities appeared less instrumental in re-establishing attachments.

### *Summary of Dialectic Themes in Disasters*

Although our discussion of both the Yungay and Buffalo Creek relocations has focused on stability and community, interdependence between opposing dialectic forces was also apparent. For example, individual identity must be somewhat viable before residents feel they can contribute to a group. Conversely, a sense of community and participation in community action can enhance individual well-being. Of the many forms of interdependence, the relationships between individual and community identities appear synergistic rather than compensatory—erosions in one linked to erosions in the other, strength linked to strength. Contrary to Packard's (1972) claim, individuals did not resort to neglecting community to regain their individual identities; communal identities even appeared to strengthen individual ones in the Peruvian case.

Prior to a disruption, some stability is necessary for and enhances place attachment. During disruption, the greater and faster and more unpredictable the change, the worse the impact of the disruption. After the disruption, additional changes are needed to retrieve a supportive context. If residents become engaged in work toward a meaningful future, they may regain a sense of meaningful and efficacious involvement in the world. Community organizations may bolster participants' individual and communal identities while

providing a future vision of stability—such as a reconstructed Yungay. If action toward future goals is not achieved, residents may be frozen into the dysfunctional limbo witnessed at Buffalo Creek. If change is both sufficient and reflecting positive identity goals for the community, then attachments may be re-created.

The disasters also helped to extend previous dialectic analyses, which were often conducted in relatively stable contexts (see Brown & Werner, 1985), where residents' identities were not severely threatened. The disasters threw into sharper relief the depth and breadth of environmental supports to identity. The loss of a house large enough to accommodate family reunions, the loss of informal neighboring places, the donation of tattered clothing all point to the importance of having identity as a family member, a neighbor or community member, a person worthy of respect by others. The loss of jobs and of abilities to rebuild homes underscored the importance of work- and competence-related identities. These observations go beyond a simple dichotomy between individual and communal identities to suggest that viable identities have strong evaluative components too; the ability to feel pride, competence and worth are crucial accompaniments to viable identities. Hence, drastic disruptions in ties to places reveal how those places had enabled people to sustain a rich set of multiple but connected identities that defined residents as worthy people.

### COMMONALITIES ACROSS DISRUPTIONS

Despite the diversity of disruptions included in this review, several similarities are apparent with respect to factors that impinge on the disruption experience. In Table 2 we have presented these factors according to when they occur within the three phases of disruption. Again, we cannot make any firm predictions concerning the pattern of interconnection between these features. We have simply culled them from the literature, placing them in the dialectic framework in order to lend coherence to the myriad possible features of disruption that are important to take into account.

#### *The Strength of Predisruption Attachments*

Both Buffalo Creek and Yungay residents were described as deeply attached to their homes and communities prior to the disaster, and in both cases there was the suggestion that the stronger attachments predicted more devastating disruptions. Fried's (1963) classic study of forced relocation of West Enders for slum clearance in Boston also suggested this link. Here long-term grief reactions, involving sadness and depression, afflicted about half the women he interviewed. Those who reported they were more strongly attached to the West End (i.e., they had known and liked the area, considered it to be home, and had many friends there) were most likely to show grief. In fact, voluntary student relocators were shown to loosen some attachments prior to

TABLE 2. FEATURES OF STABILITY-CHANGE AND INDIVIDUAL-COMMUNALITY IN DISRUPTED ATTACHMENTS

Preexisting attachments	Attachment disruption	Reestablishing attachments
<i>Stability-Change</i>	<i>Stability-Change</i>	<i>Stability-Change</i>
Degree to which attachments reflect long-term involvements, unique events.	Predictability, speed, salience of onset	Ability to create stability in the face of change
Desirability of stability	Identification with and emotional reaction to change	Ability of grief or rituals to define ends and beginnings
Ability to initiate closure and anticipatory detachment	Ability to maintain ties to former places.	Finality and salience of disruption
Orientation to new places and people	Dissensus regarding nature of change	Ability to enact desired changes, combat delays
<i>Individuality-Communal</i>	<i>Individuality-Communal</i>	<i>Individuality-Communal</i>
Awareness of attachment	Pattern and scope of disruption of people, place, & processes	Extent of losses in physical and social supports to identity
Strength and replaceability of identity bases	Ability to choose new place	Ability of places to provide desired identity & security
Extent to which place reflects identity	Transformation of safe to dangerous places and people	Privacy, territory control
Cohesiveness of community	Degree of identity insult and desirability of new identity	Loss of valued identities and development of positive ones
Strength of individual and communal resources	Possibility of self-help	Degree of community consensus
	Responsibility for disruption	Attachment via external threat

disruption, perhaps to avoid a sudden severance of those ties. The strength of predisruption ties is also important in burglary disruptions; burglaries of homes are described as more devastating than burglaries of commercial areas because of the strength of attachments to the former (Brown, 1985). Although most of these studies are retrospective in nature, they all suggest that the strength of preexisting ties predicts the intensity of disruption.

#### *Prerelocation Resources*

Some aspects of prerelocation resources appear to predict vulnerability to disruption and the ultimate ease of recovery. In Yungay and Buffalo Creek, one reason residents settled in such harsh surroundings was to escape pressures from mainstream society, a reflection of their precarious standing in the larger social order. Both crime victims and forced relocators often have few resources to begin with, which leaves them more vulnerable to disruption. The poor are

often moved for slum clearance or government works (Colson, 1971; Fried, 1963). A lack of resources can compound the problems of coping and reattachment as well as decrease the aid given to victims after a disaster (e.g., low-income neighborhoods received less aid than upper-income ones after the 1989 California earthquake; Gurwitt, 1990).

#### *Failure to Acknowledge the Value of Losses*

Relocation authorities often fail to acknowledge the benefits provided by prerelocation homes and communities, often because they fail to appreciate the source and nature of residents' strong attachments to place. What were viewed as slums to relocation authorities in Boston's West End were homes to its residents (Fried, 1963). Gwembe Tonga residents strongly resisted relocation for a dam project because they required the continued residence of at least one lineage member on the old homestead in order to maintain the important magical powers derived from lineage ancestors (Colson, 1971). Thus relocation authorities are insensitive when they show no insight into how place attachments provide anchors of meaning in residents' lives by symbolizing and sustaining self, family, or home.

#### *Degree of Change after Relocation*

Disrupted place attachments are difficult to re-create when the new situation shows little familiarity. In the disasters, new housing in particular violated stable organizing features of society and proper boundaries and expressions of individuality and communality. Other relocation efforts have been shown to provide housing that violates customary roles of men and women (Colson, 1971), guests and visitors (Brolin, 1976), family members (Gauvain *et al.*, 1983; Marris, 1986), or family groups (Colson, 1971). Amongst more voluntary relocators Feldman (1990) has noted a particular form of attachment called "settlement identity" that represents attachments to a particular type of place. People show attachments to places like cities or suburbs, which suggest differing identities for respective residents and which may provide continuity for those moving from one suburb to another. Similarly, students going to college often reassured themselves by remembering similar experiences in their lives, thus providing a sense of continuity in the change.

One feature of new housing that seems especially salient to many undergoing disruption is the ability of housing to make them feel secure. Among the Gwembe, who were suffering increased death rates due to food problems at the new location, the denser settlement forms of the new housing meant that more residents than normal could hear the funeral drums, thus heightening awareness of deaths within the group (Colson, 1971). Similarly, Buffalo Creek victims pointed out how their trailers amplified the noise of rain, exacerbating fears of future flooding. Burglary victims too seem to struggle with the knowledge that home security is often a psychological construction rather than a physical reality.

*Community Disability versus Community Action*

Documentations of other disasters also suggest that community organizations can help victims with recovery, especially when problems are of such magnitudes that governmental or corporate assistance is required. A particularly useful examination of toxic disasters by Edelstein (1988) showed that communities often become "disabled" in the face of government, corporate, and media hegemony and widespread "dissensus" among victims regarding the nature, origins, and remedies for the disaster. Dissensus impedes community action and may be linked to all three phases of our model. Dissensus is more likely when: predisaster community identity is weak or diffuse (e.g., with heterogeneity, geographic dispersion, absence of formal organizations) or dependent on those responsible for the disaster; the disaster itself has socially and/or spatially isolated impacts; and postdisaster community organizations cannot agree on the nature of the disaster or become worn down by bureaucratic delays.

All of these factors were present to some degree in Buffalo Creek. But we suspect that another important cause of dissensus was the loss or tainting of the physical ingredients of individual and, especially, communal identity during the disaster, making cohesive action difficult to initiate. In Buffalo Creek, not only did these individualistic residents lose their homes, a major symbol of identity, they also lost the spatial bases of organization into long-standing neighborhoods that had undergirded a sense of community. The geographic and design features that had sustained informal neighboring and had been intrinsic to residents' patterns of attachments were no longer available to provide a needed sense of community. In Yungay, residents compensated for the loss of the plaza as the major locus of community activity by using alternative sites such as shops, churches, or the scar itself.

In contrast to disabling effects, residents are enabled (Edelstein, 1988) when they channel their anxieties into shared community identity and action, take the initiative and decision-making process from the hands of outsiders, and identify existing points of common interest and common targets in order to rally residents together. This effect was apparent in Yungay, where victims out of necessity initiated their own recovery efforts and sustained them in the face of opposition when government officials tried to dictate their choices. Particularly striking was the use of physical symbols to give tangible form to their common interests and goals.

## FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND SUMMARY

*Patterns across the Phases of Disruption*

As we stated earlier, it appears that there are a number of connections between the three phases of disruption, but these have never been investigated systematically. For example, similarity between pre- and postdisruption set-

tings appears to lessen the stress of disruption because individuals continue to experience stability and are comfortable with the opportunities to maintain their sense of identity and self-worth in the new setting. In addition, characteristics of the disruption itself are important in the recovery process because they influence opportunities for coping and defining the disruptive threat as over. We have pointed out some of these connections, but future research needs to address these connections more comprehensively.

#### *Additional Disruptions*

Our review has necessarily been selective, focusing on burglaries, voluntary relocations, and extreme disasters that involved the loss of family and community members, and homes and community structures. It would be useful to apply our model to other disruptions that differ in temporal and social scale. For example, slower, less dramatic erosions in attachment are also widespread. These could be due to deteriorations in family relations at home, deterioration in the perceived safety, civility, and appearance of neighborhoods (Taylor & Perkins, 1989), or encroachment by traffic or commercial uses (Applayard, 1981). Even some environmental problems have a more gradual character, such as a 15-year-old underground anthracite coal fire in Centralia, Pennsylvania, that remained an ambiguous danger for residents. The gradual nature of these changes may invite adaptation rather than participation in large-scale changes.

In terms of social scale variations, it would be useful to contrast individual household-level losses (e.g., following fires or evictions) with disruptions to entire communities. The disruptions of place processes provoked by burglary suggested that bonds to the community are also affected by the household event of burglary. Edelstein (1988) has found that toxic disasters often pit proximal neighbors against one another, with affected households clamoring for attention and unaffected ones resenting the complaints and attendant stigma and property devaluations.

Similarly, it would be useful to understand how citizen participation in community organizations relates to the experience of attachment and to other means for adjusting to disrupted attachments. For example, it may be argued that a group of residents must have at least some attachment to the community to be interested in organizing and working together (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Perkins, Florin, Rich, Wandersman, & Chavis, 1990). Although our review focused on formal community participation strategies, informal or individualistic strategies may also provide some relief. Because formal and informal social networks can offer material help and labor, information, and emotional support, communal strategies may be more efficacious than individualistic strategies alone.

#### *Disruption Due to a Change in People*

Although we discussed disruptions of places and processes, disruptions can result from changes in people as well. For example, death, divorce, or

leaving home may disrupt home attachments. In addition, increased crime and disorder (Perkins *et al.*, 1990), gentrification, or migration may disrupt community attachments. Similarly, physical disabilities or deterioration of health may disrupt attachments to home, such as when families must care for terminally ill members. As residents transform living rooms to bedrooms, displace sofas with hospital beds, and make beds into dining areas, the home may become more of a tangible reminder of recent losses than a place of positive memories. In sum, social changes in households and communities may have ramifications for place attachment that deserve study.

### *Summary*

We have shown how place disruptions interrupt the processes that bind people to their sociophysical environments. Disruptions are difficult to deal with because the ties that bind people include multifaceted connections, occurring at multiple levels, that provide a taken-for-granted orientation to the world. A disruption means that individuals must define who they are and where they are going without the benefit of the tangible supports that formerly bolstered such intangible understandings. In order to comprehend the disruption fully, one must examine preexisting conditions that influence the experience of attachments as well as postdisruption conditions that influence how individuals can cope with their losses and begin rebuilding ties to places and people.

The difficulty of coping with loss and reconstructing place attachments is exacerbated by the fact that individuals rarely appreciate the depth and extent of these attachments. Although residents quickly develop an understanding of their losses, others are not so sensitive. Relocation authorities assume residents simply need new housing. But residents have also lost the social, cultural, and physical grounding offered by homes and communities. Similarly, others view burglary as a simple property crime, while victims themselves suffer losses of security and identity in addition to property. The analysis offered in this chapter is a first step toward framing disruptions in a more general way, pointing out that they are threats of change overload and insults to both individual and communal bases of identity.

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